1-22-2020

# Trends in Teaching Pre-Assignment Preparation Strategies in ASL-English Interpreter Education Programs

David M. Rice
*Western Oregon University*

# Trends in Teaching Pre-Assignment Preparation Strategies in ASL-English Interpreter Education Programs

By

David M. Rice

A thesis submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:
Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies
January 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank the members of my committee, Amanda Smith, Elisa Maroney, and Diana Gorman Jamrozik, for all of their help throughout my time in graduate school. Amanda, your dedication to reflective practice will change the interpreting field forever and your quick wit, humor, and charm brighten any classroom you enter. Elisa, you have taught me so much about research and what it means to be a teacher dedicated to students' success. Thank you for always being flexible and working with me. Your mantra, "You are where you're supposed to be," has comforted me more times then you could know. Diana, thank you for inspiring me to stay academically curious and supporting me even before I was your student.

In fewer words, I also want to thank my other instructors from Western Oregon University: Erin Trine, Vicki Darden, and Carolyn Ball.

I could not have completed this program without my amazing cohort. I especially want to thank Marcus Gunter and Cameo Hunsaker. The support that you have given me has helped me grow not only academically, but also as a human being.

I want to give a special shout out to Angela Malcomson who has always been a mentor of mine, even before she let me take over teaching her favorite course. You inspire me to always keep striving to improve and have been instrumental in my development.

To my girlfriend, Taylor, thank you for all the love, support, and understanding you have given me over the past two years. I couldn't have asked for anything more.

To my best friend, Schuyler Wolf, thank you for proofreading my papers and for keeping me sane through all the insanity we have been through together.

And to my other friends and family, thank you for your support through this important time in my life. I promise I'll be more available to hangout now that I'm finished with graduate school (for now at least).

Lastly, I would like to thank my participants. You have given your time and knowledge, without compensation, to help advance the breadth of interpreting research. Undoubtably, you have also helped me become a better interpreter.

I hope this research will honor the gifts that all of you have given me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

# ABSTRACT

Trends in Teaching Pre-Assignment Preparation Strategies in

ASL-English Interpreter Education Programs

By

David M. Rice

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

Western Oregon University

January 2020

Through the process of interviewing instructors of ASL-English interpreting courses, trends in how pre-assignment preparation is taught to students in interpreter education programs (IEPs) were identified and documented. Until now, there have been no studies on how preparation methods are taught in IEPs. Through a cursory examination of ASL-English interpreting curriculum and a look into relevant research, it was found that no standard on how to prepare for assignments or how to teach

preparation strategies currently exist within the field of ASL-English interpreting (Nicodemus et al., 2014).

Trends in how preparation is taught included data on the amount of context given to students before asking them to interpret, techniques used in teaching preparation**,** information about where preparation is taught within an IEP, participant's satisfaction with students' preparation abilities, and ways the process of teaching preparation skills could be improved.

Participants shared their thoughts on themes discussed in the literature on preparation which included topics such as the demands that interpreters prepare for, the value of preparation, the variables that the selection of preparation methods depend on, preparation significance for interpreters of various skill levels, the debate between conceptual preparation and terminological preparation approaches, reasons that an interpreter may not prepare, the role of agencies in the preparation process, and the possible negative effects of over-preparing.

Participants also explained how they learned how to prepare for assignments; how they prepare for both assignments they are familiar with, and those they are not; and whether or not they are satisfied with their own ability to prepare for assignments.

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

I remember, in great detail, the first assignment my community interpreting practicum mentor brought me to. I was a senior in my interpreter education program (IEP) and this practicum class was the second of the two required to earn my degree. At this point in my studies, I had taken all of the other interpreting, American Sign Language (ASL), and Deaf culture courses. I had some interpreting experience working with consumers under the supervision of a mentor who worked as an educational interpreter in a high school, but this was my first time interpreting for Deaf adults beyond the walls of my IEP.

The assignment was quite different from the interpreting that I find myself doing regularly now that I am a professional interpreter. This assignment was a completely scripted dinner theater entertainment event where people of all ages could come and watch a show while sharing a meal. After I agreed to accompany my mentor to the job, he sent me the script and told me to come prepped and ready to interpret. In my mind, I had an idea of what that meant, but as I opened the script and began to review it, I quickly realized that I did not know how to even approach preparing for this assignment.

Completely unsure of what to do, I read over the script a couple times, checked the definitions of a few words in an English dictionary, searched a few ASL dictionaries for signs I did not know, and attempted to sight translate some of the parts of the script. But despite the couple of hours I spent going over the script, I struggled immensely during the assignment and eventually, my mentor took over and interpreted the rest of the show.

I remember wondering why I found the assignment so difficult when I had advanced access to every word uttered. Part of my struggle was due to my lack of interpreting experience, but I knew that my preparation was not as beneficial as it could have been. I wish I could say after that experience I poured over the literature on preparation techniques, but I did not. I thought that with time my preparation would improve, and it did improve marginally, but my preparation was still not as productive as I wanted it to be.

When I accepted assignments that had preparation materials available, I did not know what to do with them. I mainly focused on making sure I understood the terminology and had the ASL vocabulary for the concepts to be discussed, but my preparation methods did not advance much beyond that. For the bulk of work I accepted, no preparation materials were provided. How was I supposed to be prepped and ready for those jobs?

It was experiences such as those and my curiosity about the readiness-to-work gap researched by Cogen and Cokely (2016), Smith and Maroney (2018), and Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004), that renewed my interest in the subject of interpreter preparation. When choosing a potential topic to research, I wanted to choose a subject that could, even minimally, help bridge the work-readiness gap experienced by recent graduates of IEPs. I asked myself, "What can interpreters do to quickly improve the quality of their work?" Then the answer seemed obvious, they could learn how to better prepare for interpreting assignments. After all, preparation has been a vital part of interpreters' ability to do their work successfully since the beginning of the interpreting profession around the time of the convening of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and

the establishment of the League of Nations (Baigorri-Jalón, 2014). Preparation has also been noted as being invaluable to the success of the interpreters at the Nuremberg Trial, the birthplace of the system of simultaneous interpreting we know today (Gaiba, 1998). Unfortunately, while other topics related to interpreting have been explored extensively since then, the topic of preparation has not been the subject of much research (Gile, 2002; Kauling, 2012).

**Statement of the Problem**

As I discussed my potential topic with some of my interpreter friends and colleagues, I found out that they shared many of the same insecurities about how they prepare for assignments. We all felt that our preparation process could be improved. We try to recall if and how we were taught how to prepare for assignments when we were in our IEP, but we struggled to remember. I do not think it would be fair to say that we were never taught any preparation methods. But if we had been taught something about how to prepare for assignments, the learning did not stick. There was certainly no formal step-by-step guide leading us through the process.

For something regarded as being so vital for interpreters, it would seem that there is little to no standard regarding how preparation for an assignment should be taught in IEPs (Nicodemus et al. 2014). Until now, there have been no published studies on how preparation skills have been taught to interpreters.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to collect initial data that identifies the trends in how direct, pre-assignment preparation is taught to students of interpreter training programs. Hopefully, this research can serve as a baseline for future research on the topic of

preparation and its place within IEP curriculum. My hypothesis at the beginning of this research was that no standard method of teaching assignment preparation skills has been developed yet. The scope of this study is too limited to definitively answer that question, but if true, perhaps this and future research on the topic could lead to more thoughtful discussions about how to integrate teaching preparation skills into IEP classrooms.

There may be a day where the subject of interpreter preparation has been researched sufficiently enough to establish a list of best practices. However, in order to create such a list, it is important to know what types of practices are used by interpreters and taught to developing professionals. As this research and the research of others will suggest, it seems that what preparation methods work best may be highly individualized (Kauling, 2012). If that is the case, with more knowledge about the various methods of preparation and how to introduce those methods to students, instructors of interpreting courses can expose their students to a wider variety of preparation methods and let students decide for themselves what works best for them.

If this baseline investigation into the teaching trends of preparation in IEPs leads to any further research that improves interpreters' ability to prepare for assignments, there may be additional benefits to interpreters and the Deaf community. For example, if interpreters, especially novice interpreters and recent graduates are skilled in preparing for assignments and in tune with their knowledge base, they may be more able to assess whether or not they are a good fit for an assignment, which may lead to better service to the Deaf community. Additionally, if through preparation, interpreters are more equipped to handle the demands they face, they will gain more decision-making latitude and

potentially experience less stress and a lower rate of burnout (Dean & Pollard, 2001; Humphrey, 2015).

To investigate these trends, I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with seven interpreter educators from different IEPs. During the interviews, I collected data that describes how the participants teach direct preparation skills to their students, how they use preparation in their own interpreting work, and how they learned how to prepare for interpreting assignments. I also asked them to describe how their students adopt those methods into their work and if they believe the methods that students use to prep for assignments are effectively helping them prepare to interpret. In addition, I asked what they thought students could do to prepare more effectively and if they have noticed any other methods of preparation that interpreters use in their work that differs from what they were taught when they learned how to interpret.

The main limitation of the methodology is the small sample of participants. Because only seven educators were interviewed, the results from this study cannot be generalized to the entire field of interpreter education, however the results and conclusions may be able to serve as a basis for further research. A detailed account of the methodological limitations of the study will be described later in the methodology chapter.

## Theoretical Bases

**Gile's Effort Model and How Preparation Eases Interpreting Tasks.** In order to understand why preparation is beneficial for interpreters, it is helpful to think about the task of interpreting through the lens of Gile's (2002, 2009) Effort Model. In his Effort Model of simultaneous interpreting, Gile (2009) categorizes the tasks involved with

interpreting into four different Efforts: the Listening and Analysis Effort (Gile abbreviates this to simply the 'Listening Effort'), the Production Effort, the Memory Effort, and the Coordination Effort. If any of the Efforts require more mental capacity than an interpreter has dedicated to that task or if the total capacity required to interpret is greater than the interpreter has available, saturation occurs and problems such as omissions or speech/sign errors will result (Gile, 2009).

The Listening Effort consists of the tasks an interpreter engages in during all stages of comprehension from the physiological act of hearing or seeing phonemes from the source language to coming to a final determination of the meaning of the words uttered (Gile, 2009). When an interpreter works from a signed language into a spoken language, Gile offers an alternative name for this phenomenon, the Viewing and Analysis Effort, however for simplicity sake, this study will refer to this Effort as the Listening Effort regardless of the modality being used by an interpreter.

The Production Effort includes interpreting tasks from the mental reformulation of the message to the delivery of the target language and any post-delivery corrections (Gile, 2009). The Memory Effort refers to the short-term memory operations involved in interpreting. Finally, the Coordination Effort encompasses the tasks related to shifting attention and energy between the other Efforts.

By engaging in pre-assignment preparation, interpreters may make information more cognitively available. Gile (2009) refers to this occurrence as priming and offers the following definition:

> In psychology, a phenomenon whereby if a stimulus has been presented to a person once, when it is presented next, reaction to it is faster. In the context of

> language availability (chapter 9), certain situations may prime certain language subsets. (p. 262)

Priming has several implications on the energy required to engage in the Efforts described by Gile.

When interpreters are engaged in the tasks involved in the Listening Effort, having information primed and more cognitively available can improve an interpreter's ability to engage in anticipating (or predicting) a speaker's utterances before they produce them (Liu, 2009; Patrie, 2000). This is a popular information processing strategy used by interpreters to help manage the flow of information. Speaking on the subject of the role of knowledge in the interpreting process, Moser (1978) states,

> To put it bluntly, the more the interpreter knows, the more he can predict, and the better his knowledge is of anything (i.e. the more relations have been established between concepts to form conceptual clusters or ideas), the faster he can predict. (p. 360)

If interpreters can correctly predict what will be said, that leaves more time and energy for the other Efforts.

The energy required by the Memory Effort may also be lessened if interpreters engage in pre-assignment preparation. In the same way that chefs prepare their ingredients so they can easily access them during the cooking process, interpreters that have done their mental "mise en place" need to spend less time searching their long-term memory for the concepts being interpreted. With less effort being spent on knowledge retrieval, energy may instead be spent on holding information in short-term memory or on other tasks.

Depending on the type of preparation completed by an interpreter, the energy required by the Production Effort may be reduced as well. For example, if an interpreter attempting to prepare for a pre-surgical consultation with an English-speaking doctor and a Deaf patient with a carpal tunnel injury watches a video of a Deaf medical professional describing the procedure, that interpreter can borrow the language used in the video when interpreting what the doctor says. Or maybe that interpreter prepares by studying pictures of the inner workings of the wrist. Using either method, the interpreter has primed concepts that will be helpful for producing an interpretation in ASL.

Much in the same way, if an interpreter was interpreting a speech by a Deaf individual about their experience attending a residential school for the Deaf, it may be helpful for the interpreter to read a book on Deaf culture to see how culturally Deaf concepts are idiomatically conveyed in English. These types of preparation may reduce the mental labor necessary to produce an equivalent message in the target language and free up energy to produce more idiomatic interpretations or in the tasks involved with the other Efforts.

These examples of how preparation can reduce the energy required by each of the Efforts as described by Gile (2009) may seem insignificant. Some interpreters do not perceive much value in preparing for assignments (Gile, 2002; Kauling, 2012). However, Gile (2002) remarks that preparation is of great importance because "interpreters work close to saturation, so that any 'savings' in processing capacity requirements are likely to be of substantial value" (p. 12).

**Signed vs. Spoken Language Interpreting.** Throughout this study, references to signed and spoken language interpreting research are made. It is important to note some

of the similarities and differences between the two. Kauling (2012) states that "in general, the processes that take place in spoken interpretation also apply to sign language interpretation" (p. 12). Both engage in the task of transferring the meaning of an utterance from one language into a different language in real time. The main difference between the two lies in their modalities. Spoken language users primarily use their mouth and ears to communicate whereas signed language users primarily use their eyes and hands to converse. Because of this important difference, simultaneous interpreting involving a signed language can occur without the specialized equipment often needed at international conferences where more than one language is spoken (Kauling, 2012). Additionally, due to the visual nature of signed languages, interpreters may benefit from studying visual information related to the content of an assignment. For example, if an interpreter is interpreting a course on engine repair, it may be helpful for an interpreter to know what the engine looks like so that they can set up the parts of the engine in space and visually refer to the parts throughout the class.

Like signed language interpreting, spoken language interpreting can occur in both conference and community settings (Kauling, 2012). Community interpreting for spoken languages is typically provided in a limited number of settings that require communication to be accessible in any language, such as hospitals or courtrooms (Kauling, 2012; Pöchhacker, 1999). Community interpreting for signed languages occurs more frequently, and in more settings, than is common with spoken language interpreting. In the United States, this can be contributed to the fact that Deaf people are a protected class of individuals. Laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandate that schools, government services,

and other places of public accommodation provide signed language interpreters to Deaf individuals who request that accommodation (Ball, 2013). Signed language interpreters may interpret at a Deaf person's workplace, in their classroom, at their church, on the stage of a show they are attending, or any other place of public accommodation. Because of these differences in where signed language interpreters work, they may need to utilize different preparation methods than spoken language interpreters or interpreters that work primarily in conference settings.

Unlike international conferences, many community settings do not regularly have a need for signed or spoken language interpreters. If the hearing consumer is not the person who booked the interpreter, sometimes they are unaware that there will even be an interpreter present. This may create some extra challenges for interpreters trying to receive preparation materials in advance of the interpreted event especially if hearing consumers are unaccustomed to working with an interpreter. The challenge of obtaining preparation materials may even be more difficult for signed language interpreters as they do not need any special equipment for communication to occur successfully and therefore, providing accommodations for the interpreter may be even more of an afterthought.

**Definition of Preparation**

Preparation as it applies to interpreting is a somewhat vague term and thus its definition in terms of its use in this study should be stated explicitly. In the context of this study, preparation can be described as the steps an interpreter takes to expand their specialized knowledge specific to the assignment for which they are preparing. This is sometimes referred to as "direct preparation" (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Luccarelli, 2006). It

should be noted that this is not the only kind of preparation interpreters can engage in. There are infinite ways that interpreters can advance their world knowledge in general which may help them during an interpreting assignment. For example, an interpreter may read the newspaper daily to stay aware of current events and that may help them while interpreting, but this type of knowledge acquisition that is not specific to preparing for a specific assignment is beyond the scope of this study.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

While the notion that preparation benefits an interpreter's ability to do their job well is rarely contested (Luccarelli, 2006), literature on the topic of interpreter preparation is limited (Gile, 2002). Few people in the fields of spoken or signed language interpreting have specifically looked at preparation as a topic for investigation (Nicodemus et al., 2014). In the past few years, some research has been done on the effects of preparation on an interpreter's work, but none have tested the efficacy of various methods used by interpreters (Gile, 2002) nor has data ever been collected in mass about how signed language interpreters prepare for assignments (Nicodemus et al. 2014). Likewise, a study on how preparation skills are taught in interpreter education programs (IEPs) has also yet to be conducted.

This literature review will examine what the existing research says about preparation and its importance to interpreters. Different approaches to preparation, sources used in the preparation process, stages of the preparation process, and difficulties that interpreters encounter when engaging in preparation will be described and discussed. Experiments related to the impact of preparation on an interpreter's work conducted by spoken language interpreter researchers will be summarized and their results discussed. Research that includes a look into signed language interpreters' preparation habits will also be examined. Finally, a cursory look at some curriculum used in IEPs and a proposed course on the subject of conference preparation by a spoken language interpreter instructor will be reviewed.

## Approaches to Preparation

In Gile's (2002) article on interpreter preparation, he explains that despite preparation being an important part of a conference interpreter's work, there has been limited study on the effectiveness of preparation. He states that there are two categories of preparation methods: terminological preparation and conceptual (or non-terminological) preparation (Gile, 2002, 2009). He explains that the people that advocate for a more conceptual, extralinguistic knowledge acquisition approach to preparation suggest that interpreters should prepare by starting with more general information about the topic then gradually research more specific information and terminology directly related to the interpreting task. Others suggest that interpreters should limit their focus to specific terms likely to be used in the interpreting task. Regardless of which approach is prioritized, conceptual preparation will involve some terminological preparation and vice-versa (Gile, 2009). He also noted, "Interestingly, the former position is advocated in the literature by theoreticians and teachers, while the latter seems to be more widespread among non-teaching practitioners" (p. 146).

**A Case for Conceptual Preparation.** In an article titled, *How Do Experts Interpret*, Liu (2009) identifies and describes several practices and skills of expert interpreters and compares them to those used by student/novice interpreters. Many of the practices and skills used by the expert interpreters involve the use of semantic processing. While the practice of preparation for assignments is not mentioned in the article itself, it would seem that preparation would aid an interpreter's ability to process semantically. As described in the article, the ability to semantically process information and use anticipation and prediction skills can lessen the mental effort that is required while

interpreting. Liu's assumptions are also supported by Gile's (2002, 2009) comments on the relationship between preparation and cognitive availability. Gile (2009) states that having more extralinguistic knowledge may aid in ad hoc knowledge acquisition during an assignment. Additionally, it would seem that conceptual preparation, as described by Gile (2002), would best aid an interpreter's ability to semantically process during an interpreting task; which raises the question, would a shift to using more conceptual preparation strategies lead to a more expert-like interpretation?

Luccarelli (2006) brings up a concern that could counter an argument for terminological preparation. He states that,

> One problem we often face, but beginners probably to a greater degree than veterans, is that we do not always correctly identify what is technical and why. The challenge is to know how to take the information you have about an assignment, identify potential problems and prepare accordingly. (p. 7)

If this is true, interpreters, especially novices, may struggle to identify what types of terminology to study in preparation for an assignment and may benefit from a more conceptual preparation approach that will better inform them of the struggles they may encounter. Another insight from this passage and the research of others is that the need for conceptual preparation may decrease with experience (Luccarelli, 2006; Patrie, 2000). If that is the case, Gile's (2009) claim that conceptual preparation is more commonly advocated by teachers would seem reasonable as they are teaching preparation skills to students of the profession.

**Support for a Terminological Approach.** Gile (2009) suggests that terminological preparation should be given priority. He states that because, "many

difficulties interpreters have to cope with online [during the assignment] are lexical and terminological, … it makes sense that terminological solutions should be given priority." This approach may also have the advantage of requiring less of an interpreter's time if an interpreter can accurately predict what types of terminology will be discussed during the interpreted event. Gile also states an unfortunate truth,

> Sometimes the mass of information required is so huge and working conditions are so inadequate (highly technical, dense speeches read out at high speed) that preparation is perceived as contributing little, to such an extent that for some medical and technical conferences, some interpreters do not bother to do any preparation other than using dictionaries to look for terminological equivalents of specialized terms in papers to be read by speakers (2002, pp. 7-8).

Gile does not condone this practice. Instead, he stresses the importance of researching the effects of preparation so that we can find out what the research says about its benefits. For signed language interpreters, this practice of utilizing terminological preparation may extend to settings beyond the medical and technical conferences where Gile frequently works. Interpreters for the Deaf also frequently work in community settings such as in higher education, which at the upper undergraduate and graduate levels can be very technical.

Nevertheless, if it turns out that Liu's (2009) conclusions about semantic processing being the key to expert-like interpretations are correct, then further research should be conducted to examine what type of preparation best aids semantic processing. This, however, is not an easy feat as Gile (2002, 2009) does note the difficulties of empirical research into the effectiveness of extralinguistic preparation and that just

because interpreters do not perceive a benefit from preparation, that does not mean there is not one. He argues that without preparation, interpreters may make serious errors if they are unaware of the terms central for the interpreting task and even the process of extracting terms can be beneficial to interpreters because they will gain a more general knowledge of the content to be interpreted. He contends that even the act of reviewing previously known terms and concepts reduces the mental energy that is required to recall and interpret those previous known items. Gile (2002) also explains that the benefits of preparation may not be immediately apparent but could benefit future interpretations.

**Preparation Sources.**

Gile (2002, 2009) lists several preparation sources that can be divided into two categories: *documents* and *human sources*. Documents can be grouped into three subcategories: conference documents, documents produced by the conference organizers; relevant background documents such as articles with similar themes to the conference; and complementary documents such as dictionaries or glossaries intended to complement conference or relevant background documents (2009). Gile makes a particularly strong argument for the use of experts as human sources saying, "…an expert can provide reliable information more rapidly than any book or database…" (p. 142). He also notes that speaking with an expert can be of great assistance to the tasks in the Listening Effort or Production Effort depending on the native language of the expert. Or in the case that the expert is "a native speaker of the target language and understands the source language, the situation is ideal" (p. 142).

In addition to this categorization of preparation sources, Gile (2002) also categorizes preparation "into two stages: advanced preparation and online preparation

(during the conference)" (p. 9). Although, in another later publication, he adds last-minute preparation as a stage in the preparation process (Gile, 2009).

**Availability of Preparation Materials.** A survey of 140 conference interpreters in China collected data about the availability of preparation materials and how they are used (Han, 2015). Han found that the most widely obtained preparation materials were PowerPoint slides, conference agendas, speakers' CVs, speech drafts, speech abstracts, and verbal information from the event's organizers. These materials, most of which could be labeled 'conference documents' according to Gile (2002), are described by him as the most important documents for interpreters because of the relevance to the interpreting task. However, Han also found that interpreters were not given these materials far enough in advance of the conference to be useful to the interpreters. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) (2004) noted the rarity of interpreters receiving relevant preparation materials with enough time to effectively prepare before the beginning of the conference. In their 2002 *Interpreter Workload Study*, the AIIC surveyed interpreters and found that their top recommendation for improving their jobs was "more briefing before sessions (advance supply of documents and terminology, etc.)" (p. 43). Gile (2009) goes more into detail about why obtaining conference preparation materials are so frequently unavailable until the last-minute saying,

> There are several reasons why conference documents are not always made available to interpreters in advance: papers are often finalized at the last moment, speakers are not always made aware of the interpreters' needs, they may not wish to disclose the content of their papers in advance, they may consider their papers confidential and are afraid of security breaches. (p. 145)

When discussing simultaneous interpreting tasks that had no preparation materials Han (2015) noted that, "freelancers performed this task more frequently than the in-house interpreters" (p. 103). This is unsurprising because one would assume that in-house interpreters have more access to the event organizers, speakers, and others that can provide them access to the preparation materials that they need to be successful.

The AIIC (2002) also found that "In [a] mail survey, 55% of the interpreters reported 'not receiving background material' as stressful, and 47% perceived 'not having enough time to prepare' as a stressor, as well" (p. 129). Han (2015) also asked the interpreters about factors that they perceive to be frequently contributing to the difficulty of simultaneous interpreting; to which they listed unfamiliarity with subject matter, strong accents, fast delivery speed, technical terminology, and lack of preparation as their top five factors respectfully.

**Experiments Testing the Influence of Preparation on an Interpreter's Work**

Anderson (1979) conducted one of the first studies on interpreter preparation. In her thesis, she asked 12 English-French interpreters to interpret edited portions of a conference's proceedings. Each subject was given either the entire script they would be interpreting, a summary page of the information to be covered, or were only told the topic of the speech. She then rated the intelligibility of the interpretations and found no significant differences between the groups with preparation materials and the groups without.

Anderson's (1979) experiment was not without flaws in its methodology. She admits that she did not control for interpreter's prior knowledge, if any, on the topics of the conference. She also only used the criteria of having over five years of professional

interpreting experience as a requirement for participation in her study. That leaves a wide range of skill variance that was not accounted for. Lastly, intelligibility is not a measurement that is typically used to measure interpreting because it does not account for meaning skews. Gile (2005) found that Anderson's (1979) study had high degrees of variability and significant deviations from their sample means. Gile (2015) suggests using a variety of introspective methods to discover the underlying causes of variability within empirical research in interpreting such as discussing problems and solutions encountered within a translation while students are in training programs, using Think Aloud Protocols, and using retrospective reports. With a different methodology that controls for more elements that affect an interpreter's work, opposing results may be found.

In another study on the topic of preparation, Díaz-Galaz, Padilla, and Bajo (2015) compared the effectiveness of interpreter preparation between a group of English-Spanish interpreting students and professional interpreters. They gave each group two videos to interpret; one had preparation materials in the form of a summary, slides, short bio of the speaker, a conference program, and a glossary of 30 terms specific to the content to be interpreted. For the other video, no preparation materials were given. The researchers adequately controlled for prior knowledge with a questionnaire given to the participants that asked them to measure their self-perceived level of prior knowledge of the content.

To score the interpretations, the researchers analyzed the interpretation for ear-to-voice span and accuracy. To measure accuracy, the researcher looked at the "(i) use of vocabulary and terminology; (ii) content; (iii) absence of syntactic interference from the source language" (Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015, pp. 12-13). The results of the study show that

the participants in both groups showed an improvement in their interpretations with the student group much more significantly impacted by the preparation materials.

In the same year, Kauling (2015) also published a study on the effects on preparation on the number and types of omissions that NGT (Dutch Sign Language) interpreters make during their work. Kauling borrowed much of the methodology used in Napier's (2004) study on omissions, but she allowed participants to review the PowerPoint slides that would be used during the interpreting task and were given 30 minutes to prepare before interpreting. Participants were allowed to use the internet during that period.

Participants in Kauling's (2015) study were split into two groups: one given preparation and a control group. The types and number of omissions were compared between participants, which she did note as a weakness in her methodology and suggested that future studies compare the effects of preparation intra-subject. Regardless of an interpreter's background,

> It was found that preparation (i.e. subject specific terminology) does have an effect on the number of omissions that occur in a translation: in general, fewer omissions were made when interpreters were prepared, and of the omissions made, more were found in the conscious strategic category. (p. 62)

Kauling did not analyze whether or not the participants' years of interpreting experience had any impacts on the results of her study. However, she did find that an interpreter's background did have an influence on the types of omissions they made, and the data showed some unexpected findings. Kauling found that for interpreters with a 'strong language background' such as CODAs or partners of Deaf adults, preparation seemed to

have a negative effect. Interpreters in the control group "made more conscious strategic omissions and less unconscious omissions than their colleagues who did receive preparation" (p. 63).

**Studies of ASL-English Interpreters**

Roberson, Russell, and Shaw (2011) completed a study that used survey data to compile a list of trends in the current practices of ASL-English interpreters working in legal settings. The survey asked interpreters about the availability of preparation materials, the preparation strategies they use, and whether or not they believe that preparation benefited their interpreting. Roberson et al. found that preparation materials were provided by the referral agency about half the time. The interpreters often used human sources to help them prepare. In order of frequency, they listed they would regularly meet with their interpreting team, other interpreters that have worked the case, attorneys, Deaf consumers, and other hearing consumers. Interpreters also listed using dictionaries, reading case files, and observing legal situations with and without other interpreters working in those situations as preparation strategies.

The benefits of preparation mentioned by the participants mirrored those stated by other researchers mentioned in this literature review (Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015; Gile, 2002, 2005, 2009; Han, 2015; Kauling 2012, 2015; Liu 2009; Luccarelli. 2006; Moser, 1978; Roberson et al., 2011). The interpreters stated that preparation: increased their confidence, allowed them to interpret more accurately because it allowed them to interpret at a more contextual level rather than at the lexical or phrasal level, increased their ability to predict and understand the source message, improved their production of

the target message, and helped them use more appropriate vocabular and affect (Roberson et al., 2011).

If the interpreters had not prepared, they stated that the lack of preparation made them feel nervous, uncomfortable, and unqualified (Roberson et al., 2011). They noted a direct relationship between a lack of preparation and the increased likelihood of errors in the interpretation and the need to interrupt the proceedings to ask for clarification. The interpreters also noted the potential effects of a lack of preparation on the Deaf consumers saying that they "may become nervous, agitated, frustrated, and confused. All of those emotions can lead to misunderstandings and can have legal implications for the deaf consumer" (Roberson et al., 2011, p. 10).

Another study done by Nicodemus, Swabey, and Taylor (2014), looked at preparation strategies used by six professional ASL-English interpreters to interpret President Barack Obama's inaugural address. The participants in the study were given the full script of the speech and 20 minutes to prepare to interpret the 18-minute speech. The participants were then interviewed about the preparation strategies they used. Some of the common preparation strategies used by the participants included: reading the script multiple times; highlighting key words and phrases (the most common strategy used); taking notes; identifying lists, metaphors, themes, goals, and challenging terms; and considering using conscious omissions and the impact on the audience. But perhaps the most important thing Nicodemus et al. found was that,

> Even ASL-English interpreters with experience in conference settings do not have standard strategies for preparing with written material, especially when interpreting a dense text under time constraints. A systematic approach to

> teaching preparation may improve the quality of the interpretations of scripted speeches, and other discourse genres, by ASL-English interpreters. (p. 27)

**A Proposed Course on Preparation**

Luccarelli (2006) and Nicodemus et al. (2014) believe that there needs to be a systemic approach to teaching preparation skills to student interpreters. Nicodemus et al. state that if interpreters continue "without a standard set of evidence-based practices" (p. 40), the effectiveness of their interpretations may be compromised. Due to the many factors that impact an interpreter's ability to prepare such as time constraints and availability of preparation materials, Nicodemus et al. suggest that interpreters be trained in using strategies in a number of different situations.

Luccarelli (2006) offers some insights on how one could teach conference preparation to interpreting students and discusses the importance of using conference preparation as a means to increase the interpreter's prediction skills. He suggests teaching a dedicated course on conference preparation (CP) to students because they often do not possess the preparation skills needed to successfully prepare for a conference. Regarding conferences of a technical nature, he discusses students' difficulty in differentiating what is technical and what is not along with the importance of understanding the technical terms in context. For example, an interpreter can review previous meeting minutes or summaries to understand the technical terms in context of the interpreting assignment (AIIC, 2004, Luccarelli, 2006). Once that has been accomplished an interpreter can "identify potential problems and prepare accordingly" (Luccarelli, 2006, p. 7).

Luccarelli (2006) suggests that interpreters take several things into consideration when preparing for a conference such as: the type of meetings, subject of meetings,

purpose and history of the meetings, specialized terminology, and the meeting participants.

Luccarelli (2006) also outlines a suggested structure for a conference preparation course which includes three classes on the subject.

> The first class will introduce the concept of conference environments, the various facets of CP, and the exercises to be assigned for the rest of the course. The second class will be dedicated to review of and feedback on the preparation exercises. The final class will be a simulated conference session with students as the interpreters, with time reserved for feedback from both teachers and students. (p. 18)

**A Cursory Look into ASL-English Interpreting Curriculum**

In order to investigate trends into how interpreter preparation is taught in IEPs, it is important to investigate how preparation is discussed and practiced in ASL-English interpreting curriculum. As the history of signed language interpreter education is fairly short (Ball, 2013), there are not many published sources of curriculum for the discipline, nor does there seem to be a standard curriculum used throughout different IEPs. In this section, three commonly used series of curriculum and two additional texts will be investigated.

The Effective Interpreting Series (EIS) is a set of 10 textbooks with corresponding DVDs that is popular among many IEPs (Patrie, 2005). Of the 10 volumes published, five were examined in this literature review including: *Cognitive Processing in ASL*, *Cognitive Processing in English*, *Consecutive Interpreting from ASL*, *Consecutive*

*Interpreting from English*, and *Simultaneous Interpreting from English*. All the texts reviewed were teacher editions.

Patrie (2000, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2016) does not frequently make any references to the practice of engaging in preparation, but she does reference Gile's (1995) research on the role of prior knowledge in interpreting in all of the books examined. In most of the books, she states something to the effect of, "The more information or ELK a person has, the more likely they are to be able to understand the message as intended by the sender" (2005, p. 132).

Patrie (2000, 2009) also mentions some skills that are often improved with the help of preparation such as schema building or the ability to make predictions based on the context provided in the message, a skill she calls *phrase-level pattern inference*. Some of the exercises in *Cognitive Processing in ASL* provide practice for this skill (Patrie, 2009). In another book, she asks students to make predictions about the context and participants based on the title and picture of a speaker of a video they will interpret (Patrie, 2005). In the books covering cognitive processing, Patrie (2000, 2009) has students engage in a reflection of their background knowledge to check if any gaps contributed to difficulties in understanding then makes some suggestions on how to increase extralinguistic knowledge. However, none of the books investigated specifically instructed students to make predictions, spend time preparing to interpret, then examine knowledge gaps post-interpreting.

Patrie (2005) acknowledges that understanding the context in which an interpretation occurs is vital for an interpreter, but she explains that the exercises in the books do not describe or provide any such context. She claims that, "Teachers and

students should devise various contexts for the exercises. This provides maximum flexibility and helps teachers prepare students for the contexts most likely to be experienced in the field" (2005, p. 4). However, prior to beginning one exercise, she does suggest that the teacher prepare their students by discussing some terms that will come up in the video. (2005, p. 212) Prior to beginning another exercise which she describes as particularly challenging due to its information load, she suggests that teachers allow their students some preparation time to review the transcript individually or in a group. 2005, pp. 216-217)

Kelly (2001, 2004, 2012) has written three books that are occasionally used as textbooks to complement an interpreter educator's curriculum. In one of her books, *Transliterating: Show Me the English* no references to preparation are made (2001). Her other two books on ASL-English interpreting and interactive interpreting both make references to the importance of pre-existing knowledge particularly when specialized vocabulary is being used (2004, 2012). Kelly makes one reference to the importance of preparing for an assignment saying, "Knowing the topic ahead of time enables the interpreter to research relevant information and become aware of any pertinent or specialized vocabulary related to that subject" (2004, p. 106). She suggests that interpreters rehearse names and acronyms out loud before interpreting and whenever possible, obtain conference documents such as a script or an outline. Kelly also advises students to continue to work on developing their preparation skills after graduating from an IEP by working with a mentor during all phases of an assignment from pre-assignment preparation to post-assignment feedback.

Kelly (2004) has some activities that have interpreters practice listing "important factors to consider during an interpretation…" (p. 17). Then, after giving students a prompt, she asks them to make predictions about those factors as if they were going to be interpreting the scenario. In another activity, she asks students to make predictions and create a list of five to ten words that they think might be uttered in a given scenario and to circle the words they suspect may be fingerspelled.

Taylor (1993, 2002) has published two books which are a culmination of his dissertation. The texts are designed to be used as diagnostic assessment instruments of ASL-English interpreting skills and are used in some IEP classrooms. Taylor acknowledges that only looking at the final product of an interpretation was a limitation of the methodology that she used to create the books and she states directly that he did not ask the interpreters about their world knowledge or decision-making (2002). Therefore, she does not make any mention of preparation except in a section disclosing the assumptions that the texts are based on (1993). In that section, she claims that an interpreter should know about the setting where the interpretation will occur and should have some context about the Deaf consumer. She also states that, "The text, the amount of preparation, prior knowledge of the particular source language stimulus, and the amount of related experience the interpreter has will all affect the accuracy of the interpretation" (p. 7).

A more recent text written by Dean and Pollard (2013) is quickly becoming popular in IEP classrooms. In their Demand-Control Schema, they categorize demands (salient aspects of the work "that will, or should, impact [an interpreter's] decision-making" (p. 4)) into four categories: environmental demands, interpersonal demands,

paralinguistic demands, and intrapersonal demands. Interpreters manage the demands they face by employing the use of controls. One category of controls that an interpreter can bring are pre-assignment controls. Controls in this category include "those controls you bring to the assignment by virtue of your background, personality, and other characteristics, as well as the specific things you do to prepare" (p. 17). In addition to this mention of direct preparation, they advise that interpreters attempt to predict what demands will come up during an assignment. Nicodemus et al. (2014) argue that, "The task of considering potential demands in a given text is *de facto* a preparation strategy…" (p. 29).

Dean and Pollard (2013) go on to say that interpreting is a practice profession rich with unpredictability. This is important to the discussion of preparation because while many interpreter scholars advocate for preparation that will aid in the task of translating the message of what is said, not all stress the importance of preparing for demands beyond that, especially intrapersonal demands.

While Humphreys and Rumsey's (2018) practical handbook on interpreting is based on the personal experience of the authors and makes little to no reference to academic studies, it is packed with advice on how interpreters can prepare for assignments. Humphrey and Rumsey explicitly instruct readers on how to prepare to interpret in 21 different varieties of settings from more general types of interpreting such as business and educational interpreting to more specific environments such as "AIDS-related interpreting" and interpreting for support groups. They even provide copies of frozen texts frequently used in those settings. For example, there are copies of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and an abbreviated version of the Serenity Prayer in the

appendices. They also offer non-setting related preparation advice such as suggestions on how to communicate with your team prior to the start of an assignment and what to pack in an "interpreter bag."

From this cursory examination of interpreter curriculum, it is apparent that while the topic influence of knowledge on interpreting is addressed and its importance noted, the related subject of preparation strategies is only sparingly acknowledged (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Kelly 2004, 2012; Patrie, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2016; Taylor, 1993, 2002). Nicodemus et al. (2014) note that, "One potential explanation for the variation in interpreters' preparation is the lack of standardized training or textbooks for ASL-English interpreters on preparing for formal, scripted speeches" (p. 40). It would seem that this lack of a standard goes beyond preparation for formal, scripted speeches and is true of most settings.

**Summary**

From examining the literature on interpreter preparation, some trends in the previous research can be identified. First of all, research on the topic of interpreter preparation is limited (Gile 2002; Kauling, 2012, 2015; Nicodemus et al., 2014). Until now, there have been no studies on how preparation methods are taught in IEPs.

There are two schools of thought on how interpreters should prepare for assignments: conceptually and terminologically (Gile, 2002, 2005, 2009). A conceptual approach is more commonly advocated by teaching practitioners while terminological preparation is more frequently supported by non-teaching practitioners (Gile, 2009). Teachers of the profession may advocate for conceptual preparation because students have difficulty discerning what is technical and what is not (Luccarelli, 2006) and some

research may suggest that conceptual preparation may aid interpreters in semantic processing (Liu, 2009).

Preparation materials are typically classified as either documents or human sources (Gile 2002, 2009). Gile also noted that preparation occurs at different stages, advanced preparation, last-minute preparation, and on-site preparation.

While many interpreters receive conference documents, they are often received last-minute, too late to be useful for the interpreters. (AIIC, 2002, 2004; Gile 2002, 2009; Han, 2015). Freelance interpreters more frequently interpret without preparation materials compared to staff interpreters (Han, 2015). Not receiving preparation material or receiving them without enough time to prepare causes a majority of interpreters' stress. (AIIC, 2002)

There have been a few studies conducted that have shown mixed results of the significance that preparation plays on the quality of interpreting (Anderson, 1979; Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015; Gile, 2002, 2005; Kauling, 2015; Nicodemus et al., 2015). However, a study of trends in preparation techniques used by ASL-English interpreters in legal settings noted several potential positive effects of preparation (Roberson et al., 2011). But Nicodemus et al. (2014) found that interpreters do not use a standard set of preparation techniques and the preparation strategies adopted by the participants in her study varied greatly.

Spoken language interpreter, Luccarelli (2006), and signed language interpreters, Nicodemus et al. (2014) both call for a systemic approach to teaching preparation skills. Luccarelli (2006) offers a suggested course outline for a dedicated course on conference preparation. Nicodemus et al. (2014) suggest that interpreters be trained in using

strategies in a number of different situations due to the numerous constraints on an interpreter's ability to prepare.

A cursory look at ASL-English interpreting curriculum shows the importance of knowledge's impact is consistently recognized, but no standard on how to prepare for assignments exists (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Kelly 2004, 2012; Humphreys & Rumsey, 2018; Nicodemus et al., 2014; Patrie, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2016; Taylor, 1993, 2002).

# METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the introduction, no study has been conducted on how interpreter education programs (IEPs) teach pre-assignment preparation skills. The purpose of this study is to collect initial data that identifies trends in how direct, pre-assignment preparation is taught to students of IEPs. In order to accomplish this task, instructors of ASL-English interpreting courses were interviewed.

## Methodological Considerations

Hale and Napier (2013) state that if the purpose of research is "to identify trends and themes, describe and interpret them, to discovery [sic] and explore and speculate on relationships" (p. 16), then qualitative research methods should be used. In general, qualitative research cannot be generalized to a population other than those who participated in the study (Williams & Chesterman, 2014); and in this case, that is not the goal. Qualitative research tends to be high in validity (Hale & Napier, 2013) which, in this study, is preferable over quantitative methods that tend to be high in reliability as the goal of this study is to describe abstract teaching methods, not quantify practices on a large scale.

During the design of this study, several qualitative data collection methods were considered including online surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Each method had their strengths and limitations.

Online surveys, while the easiest to administer because participants could respond anytime that fit their schedule, would not fit the needs of this study. It is generally considered best practice to limit the survey to a length that can be completed in ten to fifteen minutes while using close-ended questions (Hale & Napier, 2013). Because this

study sought data that is highly descriptive of the classroom practices used by participants, the use of open-ended questions that solicited lengthy responses was necessary. Additionally, due to the asynchronous nature of survey administration, asking follow-up questions would have been impossible. However, the administration of a survey may be an effective methodology for researchers to use in future studies.

Administering focus groups was considered for this study and may have yielded data that would have been helpful to accomplishing the goal of the study. Focus groups have the advantage of potentially gaining a deeper insight into the teaching trends that this study aims to describe because the "combined effort of the group can produce [a] wider range of information and ideas than a series of interviews" (Hale & Napier, 2013, p. 105). However, focus groups require all of their participants to be available at the same time which can be difficult to schedule especially during the period of data collection, late November into mid-December, when most instructors are preparing for finals. The number of questions asked would have had to been reduced in order to keep the length of the focus group meeting to a reasonable time, and thus the scope of inquiry would have been more limited than if one-on-one interviews had been used. Perhaps future researchers could utilize this method gain a further insight into how preparation skills are taught.

One-on-one interviews were chosen for this study because they allow for open-ended questions that solicit detailed responses and the ability to ask follow-up questions. Interviews offer participants some flexibility with when they participate in the study and require significantly less time than focus groups. While focus groups may produce a more detailed description, collecting a number of interview responses can also produce enough

data to be able to analyze trends. The number of questions that can be asked in a limited time frame is higher with interviews than focus groups which lends itself to exploring a larger scope of inquiry.

## Participants

Because my aim in conducting this study was to examine trends in how preparation strategies are taught within IEP programs, it was pertinent to hear from the educators working in those programs. For this study, participants were all working faculty or instructors of ASL-English interpreting courses within an IEP. Faculty and instructors that only teach ASL or courses related to Deaf culture, were excluded during recruitment.

**Recruitment Procedures.** To recruit participants for this study, I began by visiting the interpreting department websites of the bachelor's-degree-awarding interpreter education programs accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) and examining faculty biographies to identify which individuals would fit the criteria for this study. Participation in this study was not meant to be limited to CCIE accredited programs, however there are benefits to examining the practices in these programs. The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (n.d.-b) is an independent agency that accredits interpreter education programs in the United States and Canada by having programs go through a rigorous process to show that they meet evidence-based best practices as laid out in CCIE's Standards. Because these programs have been vetted and demonstrated an ability to meet a standard, it seemed more logical to begin my search for participants for this study by asking faculty and instructors from these institutions first.

To additionally limit the scope of the study, participants were only recruited from bachelor's degree programs. This decision was made because as of 2012, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) requires hearing interpreter certification candidates to hold a bachelor's degree or show proof of an educational equivalent prior to taking the interview and performance portion of the National Interpreter Certification Exam (RID, n.d.). Accepting participants from associate's degree and graduate degree programs was considered during the design of the study, but a decision to limit participation to bachelor's degree programs was ultimately made due to the fact that associate's degrees do not meet the standard set by RID to sit for national certification and because of the scarce number of programs that offer graduate degrees.

At the time of designing the study, there were fifteen bachelor's degree awarding IEP programs accredited by CCIE (n.d.-a). After searching each programs website and compiling a list of fifty email addresses from faculty and instructors who met my criteria, the participants were emailed an invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix A). The invitation included a brief description of the goals of the study, the requirements for participating, an overview of the interview process, a request to forward the email to other interpreter educators if the recipient was not one, and a link to a Google Form (see Appendix B).

If participants were interested in the study, they were instructed to complete the Google Form which included the consent form approved by Western Oregon University's (WOU) Institutional Review Board (IRB), two questions verifying they fit the criteria for participating, and a few other questions related to the logistics of meeting for an interview. A total of eight individuals completed the Google Form. All eight individuals

met the criteria for participating in the study and were contacted to set up their interviews. One participant never responded to the request to establish a date and time to meet. The other seven individuals were interviewed over a period of three weeks. Because seven interviews would provide a sufficient amount of data to identify trends in this qualitative study, no more invitational emails were sent out and the Google Form was closed.

## Interviews

**Design.** Data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over a highly restrictive structured interview to allow some flexibility in the administration of the questions (see Appendix C for the interview questions). This proved to be beneficial as a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to "build upon and explore the participant's responses to the prompt questions" (Hale & Napier, 2013, pp. 97-98). Through this exploration of topics via follow up questions, data on some unanticipated themes such as over-preparation were documented and studied.

The questions asked during the interviews could be categorized into four groups: demographic information, thoughts on preparation in general, how preparation is taught by the interviewees, and how interviewees use preparation in their own interpreting work. All of the questions were open-ended, non-leading, and participants were allowed to speak freely and expand on their answers at length. By asking questions about what participants thought about preparation in general and how they use preparation in their interpreting work, further insights were made about how these practitioners use preparation in their work outside of teaching.

**Administration.** Interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom Video Communication's video conferencing software and lasted between approximately thirty and fifty minutes each. All interviews were conducted in spoken English. Audio and video of the interviews were recorded using the software's built in recording feature. By recording the interviews, the necessity of taking copious notes during the interview was eliminated. A transcript of each interview was created and later coded to identify trends in the data.

To protect the rights of all the participants in this study, several precautions were taken to maintain their confidentiality. All files and documents related to the study were stored on the researcher's password-protected computer and WOU Google account. All identifying or potentially identifying information related to the participants was removed from published documents and participants were given a participant number to be used in place of their name. All study related data with confidential information will be deleted in accordance with IRB procedure.

## Data Analysis

As stated earlier, the audio from the interviews was transcribed into Word documents. After an initial reading of all of the transcripts, I took a grounded theory approach to coding the data. Hale and Napier (2013) state, "a grounded theory approach to research starts with as few preconceptions as possible about what is likely to be found…" (p. 85). The first step in using this approach is a process called open coding. As I read through each transcript several times, I created codes and labeled the data. Then, questions and answers from each of the interviews were compared to see what kind of relationships between codes developed. Through this exercise, themes developed in the

data. This second step in the data analysis process is known as axial coding (Charmaz, 2006). After the axial coding was complete, I expanded on the connections made during the coding process during the drafting of the findings and discussion chapter.

**Methodological Strengths and Limitations**

Because a study of this nature has never been conducted, a grounded theory approach to researching was adopted. A grounded theory approach is often used when researching topics that have not been extensively explored (Byrne, 2001). Grounded theory and open coding allow the researcher flexibility to document what they find in the data without having to use previous research to categorize what they find. Using this approach, a researcher can get a truer picture of the patterns within the data because they do not approach the research with preconceived notions of what they expect to find. One potential limitation of this approach is that referencing preexisting patterns found in previous research can add validity to the analysis and results (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Research is more trustworthy when using a literature-supported method of coding (Ott, 2012).

The use of interviews with educators of ASL-English interpreting courses, as opposed to surveys, had many strengths. Because interviews are optimized for collecting data by using open-ended questions, more detailed responses were able to be collected than would have been probable if data was collected via surveys. Through the use of open-ended questions, I was able to collect detailed responses that describe the phenomenon of my topic: how pre-assignment preparation skills are taught in interpreter education programs. The interviews conducted were semi-structured, meaning, there were a list of prepared questions that were asked, but the flexibility to ask follow-up

questions was also maintained. By using follow-up questions, I had the freedom to explore unexpected responses and topics that came up during the interviews.

Limitations of time and participant availability prohibited the use of focus groups as a method of data collection. As stated earlier, focus groups have the advantage of collecting a broader breadth of data around a specific topic. However, they require significantly more time to conduct. If a focus group had been conducted, questions would have to be limited to only a select few in order to fit a reasonable meeting duration. And due to the time of the year that data was collected, conducting a focus group with educators would have been extremely difficult to schedule as many of them are busy with their teaching duties.

Another limitation of this study is its generalizability. Because a small sample size of seven interviewees was used, it is not appropriate to generalize the results of this study. While the seven interviewees all came from different CCIE accredited programs, it still would not be appropriate to generalize the results to all CCIE accredited programs or even CCIE accredited bachelor's degree programs in part because not all of the individuals interviewed can speak for how pre-assignment preparation is taught in all of the interpreting courses at their institution.

Because the participants voluntarily selected to be part of this study, it would not be appropriate to overlook self-selection bias as a limitation of the methodology. Participants may have selected to be involved with the study because they have extensive experience teaching preparation skills in their classroom and want to share what they do, or participants may have limited experience teaching preparation and wanted to participate with the goal of brainstorming new teaching methods or approaches to

teaching the topic of preparation. Self-selection bias also limits the generalizability of the study. It would be impossible to state unequivocally that the preexisting characteristics, assumptions, and goals of the participants involved in this study did not manipulate the results of the study; and therefore, the results should not be generalized beyond the population of the study.

It is important to note that generalizability is not the goal of qualitative research. Qualitative research "is concerned with the meanings people attach to their experiences of the social world and how they make sense of that world. It therefore tries to interpret social phenomena…" (Pope & Mays, 2006, p. 4). The qualitative researcher is often unable to or does not attempt to quantify or generalize beyond the population of the study. Roy (2012) states that,

> the techniques of qualitative inquiry are arguably concerned less with representativeness than with a focus on specific characteristics of interest. Theoretical or purposive sampling is a pragmatic technique to allow researchers 'to identify and access people who can help to understand a particular type of experience'. (p. 661)

While this study is not generalizable to the entire field of interpreter education, the results and conclusions may be able to serve as a basis for further research. It is important that readers and future researchers understand the limitations and strengths of the methodology used in this study so they may contextualize the findings appropriately.

# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As this study is an investigation into the trends of how direct, pre-assignment preparation is taught in IEPs, many topics were explored and documented. The findings of the study can be loosely categorized into three types: teaching trends, thoughts about preparation, and participants' own experience with preparation. First, here is a description of the participants' demographics.

## Participant Demographics

The seven participants in this study were all from CCIE accredited bachelor's degree programs. All the participants had RID generalist certification and five participants stated that they had additional credentials. All but one of the participants had some kind of interpreter training from an IEP. Participants had an average of 28.6 years of interpreting experience and 19.9 years of teaching experience. All of the participants were female. See Table 1 below for additional demographic information.

**Table 1**

*Participants' Demographic Information*

| Participants | Formal Interpreting Training | Interpreting Experience | Teaching Experience |
|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | Some IEP Coursework | 30 Years | 24 Years [a] |
| P2 | Bachelor's Program | 14 Years | 4 Years |
| P3 | Six-week Program | 40 Years | 20 Years |
| P4 | Bachelor's Program | 23 Years | 12 Years |
| P5 | Bachelor's Program | 19 Years | 13 Years |
| P6 | Associate's Program | 36 Years | 32 Years |
| P7 | None | 38 Years | 34 Years |

[a] P1 had 24 years of consistent experience teaching workshops and 2 years of teaching experience in an IEP.

**Trends in Teaching Preparation**

While many participants stated that there is an assumption that the need to prepare for interpreting assignments is common sense, all the participants explicitly or implicitly agreed that preparation is a skill that needs to be taught. Through instruction, students need to be guided through the process of preparation including being shown what information they need, how to find it, and the value it holds.

These instructors and their respective programs all expect that students will be engaging in preparation throughout the program. Some state that their expectation is built into the success or failure of their students saying that their interpreting performance will suffer without adequate preparation. One participant went even further saying that if she found out that a student was not engaging in preparation during their practicum, the student would be penalized and possibly removed from the practicum site.

If all the participants agree that preparation is expected and should be taught, then an investigation into how preparation is taught in IEP classrooms is certainly worthy of merit. Some questions addressed in this section include:

1. How much context about an interpretation is given to students before asking them to interpret?
2. What teaching techniques do participants use to instruct students on how to prepare?
3. Where is preparation taught within the IEP?
4. What are the students' strengths and weaknesses when it comes to preparation and how satisfied with their competency are their instructors?

5. How can the teaching of preparation skills be improved?

**Amount of Context Given.** In order to investigate the preparation techniques taught to students, it is important to understand how much context is given to students before asking them to interpret. All of the participants reported that they give their students the topic of the stimuli that will be interpreted. One participant reported that she always gives her students some background information of an imaginary consumer such as their educational history or language preferences. One participant stated that she brings in guest speakers for her students to practice interpreting and that she always tries to get the speaker's PowerPoint for the students in advance to give them an opportunity to prepare. Three of the interviewed teachers stated that they will give the students more information about the stimuli if they ask for it. A majority of participants stated that they will give students some time in class to research the topic and one stated that she will occasionally limit the amount of time students can prepare as a way to practice preparing efficiently. In one instance, a participant stated that she would not give any context for a video that is used as a baseline assessment of a student's interpreting skill at the beginning of a semester.

Around half of the participants stated that they give roughly the same amount of context for regular interpreting practice in the classroom as they did for assignments such as midterm and final assessments that are graded based off of the quality of the interpretation. One participant noted that she gives students the topic weeks in advance and leads a discussion about the preparation they did before beginning the exam. She stated that during the discussion she creates a mind map on the board to help students build a schema about what they are about to interpret. Two of the participants noted that

they give students more preparation for exams and let them practice interpreting the sample before submitting it to be graded.

**Teaching Techniques.** Participants used a variety of exercises to teach their students how to prepare to interpret. A few of the participants stated explicitly that they try to model the preparation techniques they use when they are functioning as practitioners in the field. Others implied that they do this as well.

One of the most frequently mentioned techniques was the use of the Socratic method to stimulate critical thinking (see Fischer, 2019). The participants reported that they will ask probing questions to guide students to the information that will be beneficial for them. For instance, if students are preparing to interpret for an appointment with a vocational rehabilitation counselor, she might ask them, what kind of services does VR provide? Or, how are you going to arrange the seating?

Other times, instructors might try to get students to come up with those types of questions on their own. To do that, they lead their students through brainstorming sessions. Two participants remarked that they perform this activity as a stand-alone exercise with several sample assignment scenarios for students to work through. Two participants also noted that they have students brainstorm and turn in a list of terms that may come up during the interpreting assignment.

A few participants mentioned asking students probing questions to try to activate their existing prior knowledge on the topic. For example, one participant stated that she might ask students, “What happens in an eye exam?” Another said she asks students to consider their consumers before a job by asking, “What’s his or her [signing] style?” One

participant noted that many of her students tend to "check [their] life at the door" and forget to use their life experience and background knowledge while interpreting.

Two participants noted that they use Witter-Merithew's Ten-Step Discourse Analysis Process to guide their discussions (see Witter-Merithew et al., 2002). One participant referenced using Dean and Pollard's (2013) demand-control framework to brainstorm demands and potential control options with students as preparation for an assignment. Another participant explained that she uses Cokely's decision making model which she described as lists of questions interpreters should be able to answer before the start of an assignment, during an assignment, and after an assignment. She uses the questions from the pre-assignment section to guide discussions about preparation.

Two participants mentioned that they use mind maps to help students prepare. One stated that she has students complete the activity in a group during a brainstorming session and the other has students create their maps individually.

Three of the participants noted that they have students brainstorm demands they may encounter on the job as a group. One participant stated a goal of this kind of activity was to have students practice preparing with a team. Some teachers have their students prepare individually then bring what they have learned to the group. One teacher stated that she uses the platform GoReact for this activity and others have students share what they have learned in the classroom in a roundtable format. They state that by having students share what they did to prepare for an assignment and what they learned students can see the many diverse methods of preparing and the products of those methods.

About half of instructors interviewed stated that they use roleplay in the classroom or have students practice preparing for real events they will interpret on

campus. They will have students practice dialogs asking speakers and others for preparation materials. One participant stated that for an on-campus event, she had her students request preparation materials from the speaker, do research about the topic and presenter online, scope out the event space for logistical planning, and meet the speaker before the start of the event.

Some participants stated that they allow their students to watch the videos they will interpret before asking them to interpret. This is sometimes the entirety of the preparation they will receive. One teacher stated that she will give students the topic of the video, have them make predictions about the content, watch the video, then have them interpret it. After they finish interpreting, she will have a discussion about the importance of preparation.

Some teachers have students complete their preparation in class. Others will give them the topic in advance and have them prepare at home. Some will have students do a combination of both; either having students prepare at home after an in-class discussion about the subject or conducting a discussion after students have completed their research at home.

Only one of the participants stated that the students' preparation was part of the rubric used to grade interpretations. The other six participants did not grade preparation itself, but they acknowledged that students' grades may be impacted by a lack of preparation because of the impact it has on their performance.

**Where Preparation is Taught within an IEP.** Most of the instructors reported that preparation skills are taught throughout the interpreting courses in their programs. One participant stated that she started teaching preparation in some of the introductory

courses such as a fingerspelling class where she teaches them to predict what concepts might be fingerspelled.

One trend that came up in the interview responses was how the discussion of preparation evolves over the course of the program. About half of the participants noted a shift from preparation concentrating primarily on content to a broader, wholistic preparation focus. They noted that in the more advanced interpreting courses, they will ask students to put more of their energy into preparing to handle interpersonal demands and, as one participant described it, more of the "nitty gritty stuff" such as planning the logistics of the assignment. Most participants noted that the discussions of preparation become more serious the later they are in the program, especially in the practicum/field experience courses.

Some participants also stated that they try to shift ownership of the preparation process from themselves to the students in the later interpreting courses. Some went as far as to say that they will stop giving students any preparation or context about stimuli as a test to see if students will ask for it. Some note that they will turn over the facilitation of the brainstorming discussions that they once led in the early courses to their students after those students advance in the program.

**Satisfaction with Students.** Overall, participants' satisfaction with their students' ability to prepare for interpreting assignment varied greatly. Two were very satisfied with their students, three were happy with some of their students, one stated that she was not satisfied, and one expressed frustration with her students until they start to take preparation seriously.

When the participants were asked about what aspects of preparation they perceived students to have a strong grasp of, they noted several trends. The most commonly stated strength was that students are capable of investigating the content of an assignment. Most of the instructors stated that their students knew they need to prepare and that by engaging in preparation, their interpreting will improve. Two participants acknowledged that students will engage in preparation if they can get preparation materials. One said that she noticed that students tend to improve their preparation skills over time. Another stated that students have a solid understanding of the types of materials they will receive for an assignment.

There was slightly more agreement amongst the instructors about the students' preparation weaknesses. The most common weakness identified was a hesitancy to speak with consumers. This trend will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. Lacking world knowledge was another commonly identified trend. Three teachers noted that their students tend to not take preparation seriously until they are in their practicum or interpreting for consumers who are depending on them for understanding. When asked to expand on why they think that occurs, one teacher stated that she suspects that because students are not afraid of producing unsuccessful interpretations in the classroom, and that they do not take ownership of the preparation process.

Some strengths identified by some teachers were identified as weaknesses by other teachers or they identified that the strengths of some of their students are weaknesses in others. One teacher who was generally very satisfied with her students noted that "they know what they don't know." Other teachers state the opposite and that students focus too much on the content and not enough on the participants. Another

participant noted that some of her students have figured out what kind of preparation techniques work for them and others have not. One participant stated that if students have a strong basis of extralinguistic knowledge, they will be able to better narrow down the preparation they need to do. But she also stated that she noticed that students tend to be inefficient in the preparation process and over prepare for assignments. The topic of over preparation will also be examined in more detail later in the chapter.

**Other Trends in Student Behavior.** As identified in the above paragraph discussing students' weaknesses, participants noted that students tend to hesitate to communicate with consumers. One participant frustratedly exclaimed that "They're happy to Google themselves silly," but they will not make a phone call. A couple of participants contributed this to a sense that students feel awkward asking for preparation or do not want to appear to be intruding. One stated that she thought it was a maturity issue and that students need to "learn to get over it." Other theory held by participants was that students are especially uncomfortable around Deaf consumers because most of them are not native ASL users or they may feel like they do not have a place in the Deaf community. A suggested solution for this phenomenon was to have students practice a narrative several times until they feel comfortable communicating with stakeholders of the interpreted interaction and to practice different narratives for different settings and situations.

Another trend mentioned by all except one participant was the notion that students realize the importance of preparation through failure. One participant perfectly summed up the phenomenon when she said,

> There's always a moment. And I don't design it on purpose. But there'll be some moment when they've done something very well prepped, and then they've done something else less well prepped. That may be because they didn't do it themselves or whatever. And inevitably, every single student has that, "Holy crap, I had no idea what a difference it makes" [moment].

Five other participants had similar comments. One did say that she does try to get students to come to this realization by engaging students in a post-interpreting discussion about what schema and knowledge gaps they had. In her curriculum, Patrie (2000, 2009) also asks students to identify their gaps in background knowledge in this way. Three participants state that this 'failure' usually comes after students take an interpreting exam and many that do poorly realize their deficiency and improve or increase the preparation they engage in next time. One instructor stated the importance of learning the value of preparation early in the program. She stated that students need to know what it feels like to be adequately prepared and see the improvement in their final product. Participants did not seem to give the impression that this type of failure is negative. One even said, "I welcome failure because you always learn from failure. You don't always learn from success."

**How to Improve Teaching Preparation.** Participants had several suggestions on how teaching preparation skills could be improved. Two participants said they were satisfied in how they teach preparation, but they suggested that more training about how to teach preparation would be beneficial for practicum mentors. More opportunities to prep with mentors was also suggested.

Dedicated lessons on preparation was a popular suggestion among participants. Two mentioned that they thought their students would benefit from more role playing in the classroom. One suggested that there be a dedicated course on the topic of preparation. Alternatively, one suggested that teachers build in an assessment of preparation skills into existing courses. Another suggested that students be taught how to handle situations where preparation is not possible or is not conducive to preparation.

The most commonly mentioned limitation on the ability to implement these changes was time. They stated that they are limited in what they can teach their students within the confines of the program. Money was also a limitation they discussed. One stated that if they added a course dedicated to preparation, it would be an additional cost for the students. Participants also mentioned the program's/university's budget prohibits them from providing as much training and time with mentors as they would like.

**Thoughts about Preparation**

In this section, a summary of the participants thoughts on several topics around the subject of preparation will be presented and discussed. The questions addressed in this section include:

1. What types of things should interpreters prepare for?
2. What is the value of preparation?
3. What variables help determine the methods of preparation used by interpreters?
4. Do differences in the significance of preparation exist between student, novice, and expert interpreters?
5. Should conceptual preparation or terminological preparation be given a higher priority?

6. Why do some interpreters not engage in preparation?
7. What is an agency's role in the preparation process?
8. Is there such a thing as over preparing? And if so, what are the negative consequences?

**What Kinds of Demands do Interpreters Prepare For?** While all of the participants referenced the need to prepare to interpret the content of an interpreted interaction, some of them thought that too much focus was put in this area. The majority of participants also mentioned the importance of preparing for interpersonal demands. For instance, they mentioned the importance of knowing who the participants are as well as their backgrounds. Knowing the relationships and power dynamics between participants were also identified as being important for interpreters. Most also cited logistics such as how to get to a job or the placement of the interpreter as something significant to consider before an interpreting assignment.

**Value of Preparation.** The responses detailing the value of preparation were quite diverse. A majority of the instructors stated that preparation was essential to providing the best possible interpretation. Some stated that preparation helps with specific terminology, names, and spelling. Almost half of the participants said that preparation helps communicate visual information in ASL that may not be obvious from only hearing the spoken English. Some referenced that preparation can help reduce an interpreter's cognitive load and open up neural pathways. Others suggest that preparation can help with comprehension in general, improves an interpreter's ability to work with a team, and can help match Deaf consumer's language preferences. Two participants claimed that one's preparation skills also play a role in their ability to determine if they

are qualified for a job because interpreters skilled in engaging in preparation may be more in tune with their background knowledge. And one instructor stated there are numerous intrapersonal benefits of preparation including increased confidence, staying grounded in the right mental space, and reduced stress from being unsure of one's accuracy. She states that, "even if it's just about reducing your stress and the product isn't impacted at all, do it anyway."

**Preparation, What Does It Depend on?** "It depends" is probably a familiar phrase to anyone who has been through an IEP. Because many of the decisions an interpret makes are highly situational, this is a common response to hypothetical questions. The topic of preparation is no different. Every participant made some reference to the type and method of preparation depending on a number of different factors. While it may be impossible to list all of the factors that could contribute to an interpreter's decisions about preparation, it may be helpful to examine some of the possible variables that help an interpreter make those decisions.

The most commonly articulated variable was the setting of the environment. One participant made note of how some settings are more conducive to preparation than others. She stated that many medical, emergency, social services, workplace, and VRS settings are difficult to prepare for and that a broad schema is necessary for success. She also noted that settings such as theater, concerts, funerals, academic, and legal can sometimes be easier for an interpreter to extensively prep.

Other variables listed by the participants included how much time the interpreter has to prepare, access to preparation materials, and whether the interpreter expects the difficulty of the task to be related to the content or interpersonal aspects. Another

interpreter said it is important to consider all the demands present. A couple of the instructors noted that there is no one "right way" to prepare and that interpreters need to find the best method that works for them depending on their learning style, background knowledge, and previous experience in a particular setting or with particular consumers.

**Preparation Significance for Students, Novices, and Experts.** When asked about how they perceive the significance of preparation to be for students, novices, and experts in the field (the term 'expert' was not given a definition), all of the participants stated that preparation is important to all three groups. One noted,

> [Preparation] elevates your ability to do a good job. And I think that's true no matter who you are. If you're a student or seasoned interpreter, not doing the research, not doing the preparation is; it's almost like, you know, trying to drive your car without gas.

However, six of the seven participants noted that preparation may be more important for newer interpreters than expert interpreters because experts, in general, possess more background knowledge and schema. One participant suggested that newer interpreters and students "don't know what they don't know," but preparation may help with this unconscious incompetence. Another teacher suggested that preparation may be more significant for inexperienced interpreters because it is important for their success and for them to feel that they are doing a good job. She argued that novices need to feel successful or they may burnout quickly because "nobody's going to keep doing something that they fail at."

Some participants also acknowledged that what experts seek to gain from preparation may be different than a student or novice. One participant noted that experts

may prepare for more interpersonal demands whereas students and novices might be more focused on the task of linguistic meaning transfer. She noted that,

> In terms of cognitive load, [an emerging professional's] energies are much more absorbed into the actual interpreting process, product, and comprehension than all those other, like, interpersonal dynamics and power dynamics. But I think that comes with time; and that the preparation shifts along those lines.

Others noted that experts may narrow their focus to more specific terminology that is likely to be used during the assignment

**Conceptual vs. Terminological Preparation.** In the literature review section, Gile's (2009) research on conceptual and terminological preparation was discussed. Gile advocates for terminological preparation to be prioritized over conceptual preparation because he argues that much of the difficulty encountered by interpreters is lexical in nature. However, he does recognize that a conceptual approach is more frequently advocated for by teaching practitioners. Participants in this study were asked to weigh in on the debate.

Two of the participants advocated for conceptual preparation to be given priority. One had particularly strong feelings on the subject and said, "I think the least effective means of preparing for an assignment is looking up all the vocabulary" and "Don't look up signs for things. That way lies madness." The other participant argued that preparation is for more than just content; interpreters can prepare for interpersonal demands and for the logistics of the assignment. She also argues that schema building should be a high priority and that a terminological approach will not prepare interpreters for those demands.

Five of the participants advocated that both approaches are important, but most of them agreed that a conceptual approach should come before narrowing the focus to terminology. One participant explicitly argued for a scaffolding approach and that interpreters should take a general to specific approach to preparation. The majority of the instructors stated that the more world knowledge an interpreter has the better they will be at prepping.

While five participants advocated that both approaches are important, three of those participants and the other two participants acknowledged that conceptual preparation may be more beneficial for student and novice interpreters. Interestingly, their argument for that approach is the same that Gile (2009) uses to advocate for a terminological approach. The participants support a conceptual approach for students and novices because they are still focusing on lexical choices (signs) for concepts and do not have the interpreting process smoothed out yet. One reason for that may be because they think that with a conceptual understanding of content, a student or novice can use circumlocution to produce an interpretation that is still semantically equivalent. Because ASL does not have as many technical signs with community consensus as many spoken languages such as English, the skill of using circumlocution may be prioritized when teaching students of the ASL-English interpreting profession. Teachers of ASL-English interpreting may also advocate that their students take a more conceptual approach due to the nature of where signed language interpreters work. Signed language interpreters may work more frequently in community settings where highly specialized terminology is not used as often as technical conferences that are more suitable for extensive preparation. As one participant stated previously, a broad schema may be necessary for success in

settings that are difficult to prepare. Conceptual preparation methods may lend itself more to schema building than terminological preparation, however as Gile (2005) states, coming to a definitive conclusion about the impacts of preparation are challenging and require more research before claims can be made.

**When Interpreters Do No Prep.** The majority of participants stated implicitly or explicitly that not engaging in any preparation before an assignment is unethical. Like the discussion of the variables impacting the decisions interpreters make about how to prepare for an assignment, it may be helpful to examine some of the possible variables that lead an interpreter to forgo engaging in any preparation. Interestingly, a few of the interpreters admitted that there was a time in their career where they became complacent about preparation. But they did regard that behavior as unacceptable now. Some stated the difficulty that some interpreters have in keeping up with their schedule. One participant commented, “If you're so highly scheduled that you can't do any preparation, then what kind of work are we putting out there?” A few other teachers acknowledged that an interpreter might skip engaging in preparation if the job is routine or requires little to no preparation for that interpreter. Some of the instructors noted that sometimes interpreters do not prepare because the assignment may be an emergency, impossible to prepare for, and/or there are no opportunities to obtain preparation materials in advance. In those situations, they advocated for the use of last-minute preparation strategies such as speaking with the presenter to get an idea of the goal of their speech or ‘triage’ the demands upon arrival.

**The Role of the Agency.** Interpreters are often contracted for assignments by an interpreting agency. Those agencies are often the ones communicating the description of

an assignment and working with the hiring entity to get preparation materials. Some of the participants referenced the agency's role in the preparation process and some had some tips on how to work with them to get the preparation needed to be successful. Several participants advocated for interpreters to leverage their power and get the agency to find preparation materials for them. One participant suggested that interpreters request to be put on a team with a more experienced interpreter if they felt they did not have a lot of background knowledge of the content or setting of a specific assignment, but she also said that she would turn down a job if she could not get the preparation she needed to be successful.

A few participants noted that agencies tend to give very little context in the assignment's description. One participant had particularly strong feelings about the lack of information provided by agencies. She noted that it is more difficult to prepare today because of how agencies disseminate information. She recalled that agencies used to be more locally owned and more agencies had Deaf representation in the staff or ownership than they have today. She felt that agencies do not ask their customers for as much information as they had in the past and frequently assume that all Deaf consumers use ASL. She also stated that agencies today typically do not share the Deaf consumer's contact information and that in the past it was possible to make a VP call to the consumer to get information about an assignment in advance and in the language of the consumer. She found that the lack of available information from the agencies makes it hard to determine if an interpreter is qualified for a particular assignment. Like the interpreters in Han's (2015) and AIIC's (2002, 2004) studies, she found that when preparation materials

were provided, they were often provided at the last minute, too late to be of significant benefit.

**Over-Preparing.** A somewhat unexpected trend was discovered during the interviews. Two participants both brought up the concept of over-preparation and the detrimental impacts it can have on an interpreter. One participant noted that when she is preparing for an assignment where she is unfamiliar with the content or setting, she tends to over-prepare for the assignment. She also said that she noticed that one of her students also tends to over-prepare for assignments. She noted that for the two of them, the reason behind this tendency seems to be rooted in anxiety and a feeling that they are not doing enough. She noted that for people like herself and her student, it is important that they improve their ability to predict what will come up during an assignment. She also said that it is important to not be too hard on one's self if they realize they missed something in the preparation process and to learn from the experience and improve next time.

The two participants also mentioned that sometimes an interpreter will prep extensively, but then what they prepared will not be discussed. They conceded that in this situation, interpreters can be tempted to force what they prepared into the message. Patrie (2005) also acknowledges this possible temptation and warns interpreters not to add information that is not present in the source language. Kelly (2012) suggests that this temptation may be related to an interpreter's ego. She states that,

> Perhaps the people involved in the interaction are not doing something in the way the interpreter would do it, and he or she knows a way to do it better. With this attitudinal barrier, instead of listening to the message, the interpreter begins to

> think about what the participants *should* be saying instead of what they are actually saying. (p. 46)

The two participants also stated that sometimes an interpreter will make an error interpreting something that they had prepared for and will fixate on the error and become flustered which leads to more breakdowns in communication. In both of those situations, they offered the same advice, let it go and re-center yourself.

Another disadvantage of over-preparing for an assignment is that it is inefficient. The two participants argue that another cause of over-preparation is not focusing on the right things to prep. The time spent preparing inefficiently could be spent elsewhere. They urge interpreters to build their world knowledge so that they can better narrow down what needs to be prepped. One of the teachers also noticed that some students try to memorize translations of stimuli that they had prepared in advance. She said that practice defeats the purpose of the interpreting task and that she can tell by the student's eye gaze that they are rehearsing a pre-translated interpretation. A different teacher stated that she will sometimes limit the amount of time students can prepare to around five minutes to try to force them to prepare as efficiently as possible.

**Participant's Experience with Preparation**

As all of the participants had extensive experience working as interpreter practitioners before and during their tenure with their programs, they all had valuable insights on how they engaged in preparation outside of their role in the classroom. In this section, participant's experience learning how to prepare, the methods they used in preparing for assignments where the content or setting was new to them, the methods they used to prepare for an interpreting assignment where the content or setting was

familiar, and the participants' satisfaction with their ability to prepare for assignments will be documented.

**Education on Preparation.** Only two of the participants in this study could recall learning how to prepare for assignments in their IEP classrooms and one stated that she did not realize that she was learning how to prepare until after she graduated. Three participants stated they were educated about how to prepare during professional development programs or workshops. Two of those participants stated that the topic of the professional development was training in legal interpreting. Two recalled learning how to prep from mentors and another two said they taught themselves. Most commonly, interpreters learned from colleagues while working together on an assignment or for the same organization such as a school where they both worked as staff interpreters.

**How Participants Prepare for Unfamiliar Assignments.** Participants described using different preparation strategies when preparing for assignments where the content or setting was new to them compared to assignments where the content or setting was familiar. The most common preparation strategies used in preparing for unfamiliar assignments were researching on the internet, requesting preparation from the agency, watching videos online, and reviewing written documents such as a script or handouts. Other strategies used include arriving early, planning logistics, talking to participants before interpreting, preparing in stages, requesting an experienced team, considering participants and their needs, and reviewing names and terminology.

**How Participants Prepare for Familiar Assignments.** When participants felt familiar with the content or setting of an assignment, they often use more techniques that involve some kind of reflection. The most commonly described techniques were

reviewing previously known information, keeping up with the readings (in academic environments), and reflecting on previous challenges with that content or setting. Other techniques used include arriving early, talking with the participants to discuss goals or changes since the last assignment, studying the agenda, and preparing their team.

Many participants reported that their schema and background knowledge allowed them to spend less time preparing for assignments than they did earlier in their careers because their existing knowledge allows them to narrow the scope of their preparation especially for assignments where they are familiar with the content, setting, or consumers. For a complete list of preparation strategies, techniques, and methods mentioned by the participants, see Appendix D.

**Participant's Satisfaction with Their Preparation Skills.** One of the participants described that while she produces good work and prepares well, she stated that she is working on improving her preparation and prediction skills, but she will never be satisfied. All of the other participants reported being satisfied with their preparation skills. Some of the participants acknowledged that their skills have improved over time. Some of the strengths participants listed about themselves include: having a range of preparation techniques to use anywhere from 10 minutes to two weeks before an assignment, having lots of background knowledge, being a motivated lifelong learner, and being in tune with what preparation was needed for success.

# CONCLUSION

Through the process of interviewing instructors of ASL-English interpreting courses, this study collected and documented trends in how pre-assignment preparation is taught to students in IEPs. No study of its kind has ever been conducted.

An examination of the literature on interpreter preparation helped in identifying trends about how preparation is categorized, used, and discussed. Studies from both spoken and signed language interpreters have shown mixed results (Anderson, 1979; Díaz-Galaz et al., 2015; Gile, 2002, 2005; Kauling, 2015; Nicodemus et al., 2015). Spoken language interpreter, Luccarelli (2006), and signed language interpreters, Nicodemus et al. (2014) call for a systemic approach to teaching preparation skills. Nicodemus et al. (2014) suggest that interpreters be trained in a diverse set of preparation techniques due to the many variables that constrain an interpreter's ability to prepare adequately.

A cursory examination of ASL-English interpreting curriculum found that the importance of knowledge's impact on the interpreting process is consistently recognized, but no standard on how to prepare for assignments exists (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Kelly 2004, 2012; Humphreys & Rumsey, 2018; Nicodemus et al., 2014; Patrie, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2016; Taylor, 1993, 2002).

The methodology used in the study consisted of semi-structured interviews with instructors of ASL-English interpreting courses. All of the participants were from CCIE accredited bachelor's degree programs. It is important to reiterate that due to the small sample size, the nature of using a grounded theory approach with qualitative research, the

decisions made in the recruitment process; the findings of this study are not generalizable beyond the population of the study.

From the findings of this study, it is clear that the participants agree that preparation skills need to be taught and they expect their students to engage in some kind of preparation before most assignments. All of the participants reported that they give some contextual information such as the topic before asking students to interpret and the amount of context given typically does not change depending on if the interpretation is graded based on the quality of the interpretation.

Teachers reported engaging in a variety of instructional techniques to teach their students preparation skills. Some of those techniques include using the Socratic method of questioning, facilitating and having students facilitate brainstorming discussions about preparation, mind mapping, predicting demands, and using roleplay in the classroom and live events on campus to have students practice asking for preparation and having discussions with consumers. Grading the student's preparation techniques or skill was not common among participants.

Preparation skills tend to be taught throughout the IEP, but the kinds of preparation discussed and practiced become more advanced the later they are brought up in the program.

Instructors' satisfaction with students' ability to prepare varied greatly. Students were praised for their ability to research content and willingness to prepare. Trends in student preparation weaknesses include a hesitancy to speak with consumers, lack of world knowledge, and a tendency of not taking preparation seriously until working with live consumers depending on their interpretation.

Another trend identified was that students tend to more deeply understand and appreciate the value of preparation after failing to adequately prepare and seeing the consequences reflected in their work.

More dedicated preparation practice and building in an assessment of preparation skills into IEP curriculum were among the suggestions made about how to improve the teaching of preparation.

Participants stated that interpreters should prepare to handle demands such as the content of an interpreted interaction, interpersonal demands such as consumers' relationships and power dynamics, and logistics related to the assignment.

The value of preparation stated by participants included helping with specific terminology, communicating visual information in ASL, a reduced cognitive load, and reduced stress on the interpreters.

The type of preparation techniques used depends on the setting, amount of time an interpreter has to prepare, access to preparation materials, and the demands specific to that interpreter.

Participants noted that preparation is important for all interpreters regardless of experience, but they acknowledged that students and novice interpreters may need to do more preparation than experts and that experts tend to engage in different methods of preparation due to their extensive background knowledge and schema.

Of the two schools of thought on how interpreters should prepare for assignments described by Gile (2002, 2005, 2009), participants tended to favor conceptual preparation which is consistent with the trend that Gile (2009) identified. However, many participants did note that terminological preparation is also important.

While the majority of participants stated that not conducting any kind of preparation is unethical, they did describe some reasons that interpreters may decide not to engage in preparation. Some acknowledged, based on their own experience, that sometimes interpreters become complacent with their preparation or they may feel that they do not need to prepare because the job is routine or generally does not require preparation. They also listed not having enough time to prepare and not receiving preparation materials as reasons that an interpreter may not prepare. Participants also stated that some assignments such as emergency situations may be impossible to prepare for. In those situations, they advocated for the use of last-minute preparation strategies.

Interpreting agencies play a key role in the preparation process. They are often the ones obtaining preparation materials on behalf of the interpreters. One participant noted some of the difficulties in obtaining information from the agencies and how agencies have changed over the years.

Two participants identified over-preparing as a trend in their own practice and in the practice of their students. One noted that the reason for this may be rooted in anxiety. Backed up by Patrie (2005) and Kelly (2012), the participants worry that interpreters who over-prepare may be tempted to force what they had prepared into the message. They also noted that another disadvantage of over-preparation is the that it is inefficient; and interpreters could make better use of their time elsewhere.

Most participants learned how to prepare from colleagues they worked with on a job. Some learned from workshops and some learned from their mentors, but only two participants recalled learning how to prepare in an IEP classroom.

Participants described using a wide variety of preparation techniques when preparing for an unfamiliar interpreting assignment, but their preparation for familiar assignments frequently included some kind of reflection on prior knowledge. Many participants claim that their schema and background knowledge allowed them to spend less time preparing for assignments. Six out of seven participants stated that they were satisfied with their ability to prepare for assignments.

**Hypotheses and Questions from the Data**

**Conceptual Preparation.** A few trends in the data have left me curious about some potentially impactful phenomenon. First, I wonder if using a more conceptual preparation approach may be more effective for students and novice signed language interpreters. In Liu's (2009) article, he describes semantic processing (as opposed to processing at a lexical or phrasal level) as key to producing expert-like interpretations.

In my limited experience working with students, I have noticed that student interpreters, especially when they are in their first few interpreting courses, seem to be so focused on the task of meaning transfer that they often process information at the phrasal level. I wonder if conceptual preparation might be able to help them reduce the processing requirements of the comprehension effort so that they can use more of their capacity to process information semantically.

I also wonder how life experience, general world knowledge, and interpreting experience come into play. ASL-English interpreting in the United States is typically taught at the undergraduate level. If students join a bachelor's interpreting program right after they finish their secondary education, they are typically starting their interpreting courses between the ages of 19 and 21 and have little life experience as an adult.

Combine that with a lack of interpreting experience and problems arise. They do not know what kinds of things might come up during an assignment and therefore, struggle to prepare. I wonder if teachers such as the participants in this study and those mentioned by Gile (2009) advocate for more conceptual preparation because they believe that it will help interpreters with less professional and life experience.

I suspect that experienced, professional interpreters have already built a broad schema for most assignments they accept and therefore can prepare with a more focused terminological approach. If an interpreter has enough awareness of what will be discussed to effectively focus on a terminological preparation approach, I suspect it will save them valuable time.

Additionally, I wonder about how the differences between spoken and signed language interpreting impact the effectiveness of different methods of preparation. While I believe that the setting in which interpreters work warrants further research, I suspect that signed language interpreters work more frequently in community settings than spoken language interpreters. Certainly, most signed language interpreters do not interpret at highly technical conferences as often as spoken language interpreters. In my experience, unless I am interpreting a specialized university course that is unfamiliar to me, I rarely encounter unfamiliar vocabulary. Because ASL seems to have significantly fewer community adopted signs for technical terms, I find it is more beneficial for me to focus on understanding the concepts to be discussed so that I can circumvent the lack of a one-to-one lexical equivalent. Teachers may find the skill of circumlocution beneficial for their students both because of the lack of one-to-one lexical equivalents and because

students often begin interpreting courses before they are fluent in ASL and their vocabulary may be limited.

**Student's Complacency.** Three participants noted that their students tend to not take preparation seriously until they are in their practicum or interpreting for consumers who are depending on them for understanding. If this trend is common, I wonder if those students will ever come to understand the value of preparation and/or have enough skill to prepare to their fullest potential. If that is the case or even if those students experience a delay in the development of their preparation skills, it could have a significant impact on the field.

While some of the participants believe that seasoned interpreters know and value preparation, one participant held an opposing view of some of her experienced colleagues. She stated that she thinks that "a lot of seasoned interpreters didn't learn [the necessity of preparation] early on in their career and just don't engage in doing the research." Another participant noted that she tends to do most of her preparation on high-stakes, complex topics rather than familiar assignments. While that may be perfectly effective for her, it may say something larger about the situations where interpreters spend a significant amount of effort on preparation. I wonder if interpreters put more effort into their preparation if they perceive the stakes of the situation to be higher. If the same is true for students, that would explain why some students seem to be complacent about their preparation until they begin interpreting for consumers that depend on their interpretation. Maybe they perceive those stakes to be higher than interpreting stimuli in a classroom without consumers depending on their interpretation.

If that is the case, then there needs to be a conversation about preparation's place in IEP curriculum. Perhaps students need to understand the necessity of preparation earlier in the program to fully appreciate it. Perhaps an assessment of preparation skills that is built into the curriculum would be beneficial. Participants agreed that students tend to more fully understand the benefits of preparation after a failure to adequately prepare impacts their work. Perhaps interpreter educators could attempt to manufacture these learning moments earlier in the program so that students have a deeper understanding of the necessity of preparation to the interpreting process before they get to the practicum stage of the program.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study only scratches the surface of the trends in how preparation is taught to students in IEPs. Significantly more research needs to be done in order to come to a more complete understanding of how preparation plays a role in the interpreting process. If more studies are conducted on how pre-assignment preparation is taught, it may be helpful for researchers to examine other institutions such as associate and graduate degree programs and programs that are not accredited by CCIE.

Additionally, future researchers may want to use other methods of collecting data to expand on or verify the consistency of the findings from this study. Suggested data collection techniques include conducting focus groups with educators, interviewing or conducting focus groups with current or recently graduated students, observing interpreting classrooms, surveys, and collecting journal entries from educators and/or students.

It may be valuable to investigate whether or not a student's preparation complacently during their time in an IEP has more long-term effects. Never-the-less, there needs to be conversation about where preparation fits into IEP curriculum.

It also may be beneficial to research if there is any connection between conceptual preparation and an improvement in an interpreter's ability to use the technique of circumlocution.

Lastly, the idea that preparation may help an interpreter handle intrapersonal demands warrants further investigation. Hopefully, as the research on the topic of preparation continues, we can get closer to finding the best ways to improve our interpretations for the benefit of our consumers.

While more research definitely needs to be done on the topic of teaching preparation skills, I would encourage all instructors of interpreting courses to be intentional about how they teach these skills. As the participants in this study stated, students need to be taught this skill. Which means that educators, including myself, need to thoughtfully incorporate teaching how to prepare for assignments into our curriculum.

# REFERENCES


Anderson, L. (1979). *Simultaneous interpretation: Contextual and translation aspects* (Master's thesis, Concordia University, Montreal). Retrieved from https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/5/1/MK43196.pdf

Ball, C. (2013). *Legacies and legends: History of interpreter education from 1800 to the 21st century*. Edmonton, AB: Interpreting Consolidated.

Byrne, M. (2001). Grounded theory as a qualitative research methodology. *AORN Journal, 73*(6), 1155. Retrieved from https://go.galegroup.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA75562157&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=00012092&p=AONE&sw=w

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Introducing Qualitative Methods: Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. UK: SAGE.

Cogen, C., & Cokely, D. (2015, January). *Preparing interpreters for tomorrow: Report on a study of emerging trends in interpreting and implications for interpreter education*. Retrieved from National Interpreter Education Center website: http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/NIEC_Trends_Report_2_2016.pdf

Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education. (n.d.-a). Accredited programs. Retrieved October 1, 2019, from http://ccie-accreditation.org/accreditation/accredited-programs-2/

Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education. (n.d.-b). What we do. Retrieved December 15, 2019, from http://ccie-accreditation.org/about-ccie/what-we-do/

Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2001). Application of demand control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, *6*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/6.1.1

Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2013). *The demand control schema: Interpreting as a practice profession*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace.

DiÌaz-Galaz, S., Padilla, P., & Bajo, M. T. (2015). The role of advance preparation in simultaneous interpreting: A comparison of professional interpreters and interpreting students. *Interpreting*, *17*(1), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.17.1.01dia

Fischer, C. A. (2019). *The power of the Socratic classroom: Students. Questions. Dialogue. Learning.* United States: Sienna Books.

Galaz, S. (2011). The effect of previous preparation in simultaneous interpreting: Preliminary results. *Across Languages and Cultures, 12*(2), 173-191.

Gile, D. (1995). *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gile, D. (2002). The interpreter's preparation for technical conferences: Methodological questions in investigating the topic. *Conference Interpretation and Translation, 4*(2), 7-27.

Gile, D. (2005). Empirical research into the role of knowledge in interpreting: Methodological aspects. *Knowledge Systems and Translation, TTPC*(7), 149-172. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110924305.149

Gile, D. (2009). *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training* (Rev. ed.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hale, S., & Napier, J. (2013). *Research Methods in Linguistics: Research methods in interpreting: A practical resource*. London: Bloomsbury.

Han, C. (2015). *Building the validity foundation for interpreter certification performance testing* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

Humphrey, C. (2015). *Job satisfaction, role strain, burnout, and self-care among American Sign Language/English interpreters* (Master's thesis, Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/24/

Humphreys, L., & Rumsey, D. (2018). *The professional sign language interpreter's handbook: The complete, practical manual for the interpreting profession* (4th ed.). OhSoEZ.

International Association of Conference Interpreters. (2002, February). Interpreter workload study - full report. Retrieved December 19, 2018, from aiic.net website: http://aiic.net/p/657

International Association of Conference Interpreters. (2004, March). Practical guide for professional conference interpreters. Retrieved December 19, 2018, from aiic.net website: https://aiic.net/page/628#2

Kauling, E. J. (2012). *Keeping the surprises to a minimum: How Dutch Sign Language interpreters prepare an assignment based on the materials they receive* (Master's thesis, Hogeschool Utrecht, Utrecht, NL). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/12780250/Keeping_the_surprises_to_a_minimum_Ho

w_Dutch_Sign_Language_Interpreters_prepare_an_assignment_based_on_the_materials_they_receive

Kauling, E. J. (2015). *From omission to mission: The influence of preparation and background knowledge on omissions in the sign language interpretation of a university lecture* (Master's thesis, Heriot---Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/21872121/From_omission_to_mission_The_influence_of_preparation_and_background_knowledge_on_omissions_in_the_sign_language_interpretation_of_a_university_lecture

Kelly, J. E. (2001). *Transliterating: Show me the English*. Alexandria, VA: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Kelly, J. E. (2004). *ASL-to-English interpretation: Say it like they mean it*. Alexandria, VA: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Kelly, J. E. (2012). *Interactive interpreting: Let's talk*. Alexandria, VA: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Liu, M. (2009). How do experts interpret? Implications from research in Interpreting Studies and cognitive science. In G. Hansen, A. Chesterman, & H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast (Eds.), *Benjamins Translation Library: Efforts and models in interpreting and translation research: A tribute to Daniel Gile* (Vol. 80, pp. 159-178). https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.80

Luccarelli, L. (2006). Conference preparation: What it is and how it could be taught. *Conference Interpretation and Translation*, *8*(1), 3-26.

Moser, B. (1978). Simultaneous interpretation: A hypothetical model and its practical application. In D. Gerver (Author), *Language interpretation and communication* (pp. 353-368). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Napier, J. (2004). Interpreting omissions: A new perspective. *Interpreting*, *6*(2), 117-142. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.6.2.02nap

Nicodemus, B., Swabey, L., & Taylor, M. (2014). Preparation strategies used by American Sign Language- English interpreters to render President Barack Obama's inaugural address. *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, *19*, 27-44. https://doi.org/10.13137/1591-4127/10648

Nowell, L., Norris, J., White, D., & Moules, N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Ott, E. K. (2012). *Do we eat our young and one another? Horizontal violence among signed language interpreters* (Master's thesis, Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/1/

Patrie, C. (2000). *The Effective Interpreting Series: Cognitive processing skills in English: Teacher's guide*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.

Patrie, C. J. (2004). *The Effective Interpreting Series: Consecutive interpreting from English: Teacher's guide*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.

Patrie, C. J. (2005). *The Effective Interpreting Series: Simultaneous interpreting from English: Teacher's guide*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.

Patrie, C. J. (2009). *The Effective Interpreting Series: Cognitive processing in ASL: Teacher's guide*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.

Patrie, C. J. (2016). *The Effective Interpreting Series: Consecutive interpreting from ASL: Teacher's guide*. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPress.

Pöchhacker, F. (1999). 'Getting organized': The evolution of community interpreting. *Interpreting*, *4*(1), 125-140. https://doi.org/10.1075/intp.4.1.11poc

Pope, C., & Mays, N. (Eds.). (2006). *Qualitative methods in health research* (3rd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (n.d.). Alternative pathway to eligibility as of July 1, 2012. Retrieved December 15, 2019, from https://rid.org/rid-certification-overview/available-certification/alternative-pathway/

Roberson, L., Russell, D., & Shaw, R. (2011). American Sign Language/English interpreting in legal settings: Current practices in North America. *Journal of Interpretation*, *21*(1). Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol21/iss1/6

Roy, K. M. (2012). In search of a culture: Navigating the dimensions of qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *74*(4), 660-665. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00981.x

Smith, A. R., & Maroney, E. M. (2018, February 12). Revisiting: Defining the nature of the "gap" between interpreter education, certification and readiness-to-work. *RID Views*, *35*(1). Retrieved from https://issuu.com/ridviews/docs/views_feb2018

Taylor, M. M. (1993). *Interpretation skills: English to American Sign Language*. Edmonton, AB: Interpreting Consolidated.

Taylor, M. M. (2002). *Interpretation skills: American Sign Language to English*. Edmonton, AB: Interpreting Consolidated.

Williams, J., & Chesterman, A. (2014). *The map: A beginner's guide to doing research in translation studies* (5th ed.). Abingdon: Routledge.

Witter-Merithew, A. (2004). Market disorder within the field of sign language interpreting: Professional implications. *Journal of Interpretation,* 19-55. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3h0GbabTGqqMnZfRXRod2JvZnc

Witter-Merithew, A., Taylor, M., & Jonson, L. (2002). *The meaning of texts. In C. Nettles (Ed.), Guided self-assessment and professional development planning: A model applied to interpreters in educational settings* (pp. 177-96). Alexandria, VA: RID Publications.

# APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

**Subject line of email:**
Interview Request, Please Forward to Appropriate Faculty/Staff

**Body of email:**
Hello!

My name is David Rice. I'm a student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies program at Western Oregon University and an interpreter in Chicago, Illinois. As part of my master's thesis, I am conducting research on how interpreter educators teach direct, pre-assignment preparation strategies to students of the profession.

For this study, I am inviting interpreter educators who are college or university faculty/instructors of ASL-English interpreting classes to participate in an interview with me via Zoom's video conferencing software. The interview is expected to last about half an hour. Should you participate in this interview, you will be asked questions about how you prepare for interpreting assignments, how you teach direct preparation strategies, and what you were taught about preparation strategies while learning how to interpret. Your participation will contribute a unique and valuable perspective to this exploration!

**If you are not an interpreter educator, but you know one that could assist me with this research, please forward this email to them.**

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please fill out this quick survey.
Link: https://forms.gle/q4BksCkFybi9Dm4Z7

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions, concerns or comments throughout the course of the study, you may contact the primary investigator, David Rice via email at drice18@mail.wou.edu or you may contact the faculty advisor for this project, Amanda Smith by e-mail at smithar@wou.edu. If you have questions/concerns regarding your treatment as a participant, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
David Rice
MAIS Student
Western Oregon University

APPENDIX B: GOOGLE FORM WITH CONSENT FORM

**Title:**
Interview Recruitment Survey and Consent Information

**Description containing consent form:**
Hello interpreter educators!

My name is David Rice. I'm a student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies program at Western Oregon University and an interpreter in Chicago, Illinois. As part of my master's thesis, I am conducting research on how interpreter educators teach direct, pre-assignment preparation strategies to students of the profession.

For this study, I am inviting interpreter educators who are college or university faculty/instructors of ASL-English interpreting classes to participate in an interview with me via Zoom's video conferencing software.

If you are not an interpreter educator, but you know someone that could assist me with this research, please forward this survey to them.

Should you participate in this interview, you will be asked questions about how you prepare for interpreting assignments, how you teach direct preparation strategies, and what you were taught about preparation strategies while learning how to interpret.

Your participation will contribute a unique and valuable perspective to this exploration!

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please fill out this quick survey after reading this section in its entirety.

Below is some additional important information about the study and your role in the research should you choose to participate. If after reading the information below, you still wish to participate in this study, please acknowledge your consent by following the instructions in the first question.

Purpose of this study: The purpose of this study is to collect initial data that identifies trends in how direct, pre-assignment preparation is taught to students of interpreter training programs (IEPs).

Once this data has been collected and analyzed, future researchers may use the results of this study as a basis of inquiry for further research such as establishing best practices for direct assignment preparation.

Your voluntary participation in the study: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may cease to continue participating at any time during the study without penalty by informing me at drice18@mail.wou.edu or my academic advisor, Amanda Smith at

smithar@wou.edu. During the meeting, you may decline to answer any or all of the questions asked without penalty.

This interview will be conducted remotely via Zoom's video conferencing software and will be video and audio recorded in order to reduce the need of excessive note taking and analysis at a later date.

Expected duration: The interview is expected to take about half an hour.

Confidentiality: No identifying information from any participant in this study will be published. Participants in the study will be given a participant number (e.g. P1, P2, etc.) that will be used in place of their name. Any other potentially identifying information such as the participant's university affiliation will be redacted from any published information.

Digital files such as the interview recording, transcripts of the dialog, a list of the participants' identification numbers, and other study related documents will be stored on the investigator's password-protected computer. Only the investigator and his faculty advisor will have access to these files.

Risks of participating in this study: The risks of participating in this study are not anticipated to be any more than those encountered in everyday life such as one might encounter when reflecting on past experiences. If you feel any discomfort during the course of the study, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, all data related to you will be deleted. If you feel that you have undergone a negative event, please contact the primary investigator, David Rice via email at drice18@mail.wou.edu, the faculty advisor for this project, Amanda Smith by e-mail at smithar@wou.edu, or the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

Benefits of participating in this study: While there is no monetary compensation for participation in this study, you may benefit from knowing that you are helping increase the breadth of signed language interpreting research. The results of this study will aid in expanding knowledge of the practices that currently exist in the field so that more research can be done in the future.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions, concerns or comments throughout the course of the study, you may contact the primary investigator, David Rice via email at drice18@mail.wou.edu or you may contact the faculty advisor for this project, Amanda Smith by e-mail at smithar@wou.edu. If you have questions/concerns regarding your treatment as a participant, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.

Thank you!

David Rice
MAIS Student
Western Oregon University

**Questions:**

1. Having read the above information that includes a description of the study, the types of questions that will be asked, your role in the study and the risks involved with participating, do you consent to participating in an interview? If so, please sign your name below to indicate your consent.

2. Are you an interpreter educator who is a college/university faculty member or instructor of ASL-English interpreting classes?
    a. Yes
    b. No

3. Where do you teach ASL-English interpreting courses?

4. When would you generally be available to participate in an interview? (All times are in CST)
   *Note:* The possible choices for this question were in the form of a table that had timeslots on one axis and the days of the week on the other.

5. Do you have access to a computer with a webcam that can be used with Zoom's video conferencing software? (You can download Zoom's software for free at https://zoom.us/download)
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. I may need help setting up Zoom on my computer

6. What is an email address that I can use to contact you?

7. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns that you would like me to address?

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of formal interpreter training did you go through, if any?
2. How long have you been interpreting?
3. What credentials, such as certifications and/or degrees, do you hold?
4. How long have you been teaching interpreting?
5. What courses do you teach?
6. Do you think that different kinds of assignments require different methods of preparation? Please provide examples.
7. How much context about an interpreting scenario do you give your students before asking them to interpret?
8. Does the amount of context differ depending on whether or not the assignment is graded based on the quality of the interpretation?
9. Do you have your students complete any activities that specifically focus on the skills necessary for preparing for an assignment? If so, please describe those activities.
10. How satisfied are you with your student's ability to prepare for an assignment?
11. Where do you think students need to improve in their process of preparing for an assignment?
12. Do you feel that your students have a strong grasp of any aspects of preparing for an assignment? If so, please provide examples.
13. In a perfect world, how do you think preparation for interpreting assignments should be taught?
14. How do you feel you and/or your institution can improve student's ability to prepare for assignments?
15. How significant do you think skills to prepare for an interpreting assignment are to students, novice working interpreters, and experts in the field?
16. Can you describe your experience learning about how to prepare for interpreting assignments?
17. How do you prepare for an interpreting assignment where the content or setting may be new to you?
18. How do you prepare for an interpreting assignment when you are familiar with or have experience in the content or setting?
19. Are there any other preparation techniques you have heard of or can think of that may be helpful for an interpreter to use?
20. Of the techniques you have discussed to this point, do you perceive any to be more or less effective than others?
21. From the literature on interpreter preparation, there are generally two schools of thought about how one should go about preparing for an assignment, some people advocate for a more broad extralinguistic knowledge acquisition approach while others suggest that interpreters should prepare by studying more specific information and terminology directly related to the interpreting task. Do you have any thoughts on these two approaches, how they should be applied to teaching, and/or your own interpreting practice?
22. How satisfied are you with your ability to prepare for an assignment?

23. What other comments would you like to make on the topic of preparing for an assignment?

**Potential follow up questions/requests**

1. Please tell me more about that.
2. Why do you think that is?
3. Do you believe that to be effective? If yes, please explain.
4. What specific examples would you like to share?
5. Please explain.
6. Please describe.

## APPENDIX D: PREPARATION METHODS MENTIONED BY PARTICIPANTS

In no particular order, the preparation methods/strategies mentioned during the interviews included:

1. Arriving early
2. Asking to see what the equipment looks like
3. Consulting human sources including:
    a. Content experts
    b. Deaf consumers
    c. Hearing consumers
    d. The previous interpreter
4. Logistical planning including:
    a. Where to go
    b. How to get there
    c. How long it will take to arrive
    d. Considering setup
    e. Dressing appropriately
    f. Getting the names of participants and topic
5. Asking the agency for preparation
6. Reviewing the agenda
7. Predicting demands
8. Journaling about prior knowledge
9. Preparing in stages
10. Preparing with team
11. Reading the script
12. Rehearsing with the script
13. Reading other written materials including:
    a. Class required readings
    b. PowerPoints
    c. Case files
14. Researching the topic in general
15. Reviewing previously known information
16. Taking workshops
17. Using the internet to research including
    a. Using search engines
    b. Watching videos on the internet
    c. Using ASL dictionaries
18. Thinking about the content in the target language
19. Watching the speech in advance
20. Going to a rehearsal