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## The core competencies of the Portuguese supervisor's sign language interpreters' students

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### Abstract

The aim of this research was to identify the supervisor's profile of the Portuguese sign language interpreters students that improves and develops their knowledge and skills. We conducted a qualitative study using different methods to collect data, such as interviews and a modified Delphi technique, for which we created an inventory with several competencies based on a literature review. Given the specificity of this area, we felt the need to conceptualize and create a new competence – “gesture performance” defining its specificity. With this paper we pretend to describe the Delphi technique and publicize its results.

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*Keywords:* Supervisor; Profile; Delphi technique; Portuguese sign language interpreter; Competencies.

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### Introduction

Like other professionals, the supervisor of the Portuguese sign language interpreter student should be a flexible person with the ability to promote social ties (Carvalho, 2001) and stimulate the development of the supervisee's autonomy, respecting the freedom of his/her decision and initiative (Baptista, 1999).

Regardless the wide literature on the supervisors' profile in different training areas and professions, there is not enough evidence about the competencies of the sign language interpreter students' supervisor profile.

Therefore, the aim of this research was to identify the supervisor's profile of the Portuguese sign language interpreters students that improves and develops their knowledge and skills.

We conducted a qualitative study using different methods to collect data, such as interviews and a modified Delphi technique, for which we created an inventory (**SLISCY** - **S**antos **S**ign **L**anguage **I**nterpreter **S**tudents **S**upervisor **C**ompetencies **I**nventory) with several competencies based on a literature review. Given the specificity of the area we felt the need to conceptualize and create a new competence – “gesture performance” defining its specificity.

This article is divided into two main parts, the first related to the competencies and the second one concerning the panel of experts and the inventory, with the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the Delphi technique.

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## 1. Gesture Performance – a sign language competence

Sign language interpreters work in dynamic environments therefore they need to have different competencies, which they mobilize to the specific scenario where they perform, allowing them to act effectively. However Guarinello *et al.* (2008) refer that several sign language interpreters may create confusion in broadcast content, because they do not control the issues they have to interpret, and in addition, some of them are supervisors for sign language interpreters' students.

Numerous supervisors' performance is based on their professional practice and in the knowledge acquired in their academic training, which is not qualified in some cases. In Portugal, this is a recent profession, since it was only in 1999 that the Portuguese government regulated the profession, demanding a bachelor degree in translation and interpretation in Portuguese sign language to the professionals who were or wanted to be Portuguese sign language interpreters (Law 89/99, article 5º, n.º1).

Given the "considerable gap between thinking and acting, theory and practice, especially when it comes to [supervising] students" (Santos, 2011b, p. 5), a lot of professionals recognized that supervisors don't have confidence and feel unprepared in their ability to be a supervisor (Andrews & Chilton 2000; Aston *et al.* 2000; Henderson *et al.*, 2006; Levett-Jones *et al.*, 2006; Myall *et al.*, 2008; Neary, 2000). Some authors mention that supervisor's knowledge, attitude and technical skills, among others factors, play an important role in the supervisee's teaching-learning process (Andrews & Chilton, 2000; Andrews & Roberts, 2003; Ali Pa, 2008; Baillie, 1993; Campbell *et al.*, 1994; Pellat, 2006; Wright, 1990).

According to Jardim (2007), nowadays skills are essential for excellence and success in the performance. "The technical skills report to the profession and are usually acquired in the training context and when carrying out a working activity" (Santos, 2011b, p. 7). The literature refers to the importance of technical skills in the supervisors' profile especially in the initiation within the professional practice, which is emphasized by the fact that the technique is learned after a long training (Abreu, 2007; Ali Pa, 2008; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Marshal & Gordon, 2005; Philips *et al.*, 1996; Rankin, 1991; Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007).

Considering the own sign language complexity which "is a motor-manual production and with visual reception, with its own vocabulary and organization" (Amaral *et al.*, 1994, p.37), as well as the characteristics of the deaf culture (behavior attitudes) – "there are differences in the behavioral attitudes of the deaf community, especially those regarding touch, eye contact and use of facial expressions" (Santos, 2011a, p. 323) - we felt the need to conceptualize and create a competence that would take this specificity into account.

Competencies such as having a good memory, being an expert/member of the deaf culture, and improving performance with the Portuguese sign language and the Portuguese language should be considered for the Portuguese sign language interpreters' students supervisor profile (Santos, 2011b). The reason why we created the competence "gesture performance" and defined it resulted from the fact that we did not find in the literature a specific competence mentioning the technical skills when performing in sign language.

**Gesture performance: concept which refers to the technical skills with specific characteristics (such as harmony, tension, hand configuration, hand orientation, movement, posture, special localization of the gesture, activity, gestural rigor, discursive gestural flow) not only to perform as a supervisor in a way that it allows the supervisee to increase and develop fundamental technical skills for the professional practice, but also to perform as a sign language interpreter**

Being a new profession in Portugal, with no evidence about the supervisors' profile and after a literature review about the competencies for supervisors in other areas we built an inventory comprised with several competencies that cut across other areas and the new one - gesture performance.

The competencies in **SLISCY** are: **gesture performance, being helpful** (Abreu, 2007; Cruz, 2006; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Myall *et al.*, 2008; Rankin, 1991 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **being updated** (Amaral *et al.*, 1994), **safe environment** (Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Nunes, 2007; Pollard & Trigs, 1997 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **articulation between cultures and theoretical articulation of practice knowledge** (Alarcão & Tavares, 2003; Amaral *et al.*, 1994; Cruz, 2006; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gesueli, 2006; Holloway, 1995; Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003 e Reagan, 1995), **assertiveness** (Jardim, 2007 e O'Malley *et al.*, 2000), **self criticism** (Alarcão e Tavares, 2003; Cruz, 2006; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Munsom, 2002 e Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003), **self esteem** (Abreu, 2007; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Jardim, 2007; Rankin, 1991 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **evaluation** (Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Cruz, 2006;

Kilcullen, 2007; Nunes, 2007; O'Malley *et al.*, 2000; Pollard & Trigs 1997 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **listener** (Abreu, 2007; Cruz, 2006; Darling, 1984 e Hodges, 2009), **collaboration** (Abreu, 2007; Cruz, 2006; Gray & Smith 2000; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Lemos *et al.*, 2009 e Marshal & Gordon, 2005), **being understanding** (Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Hughes, 2004; Marshal & Gordon, 2005; Myall *et al.*, 2008 e Philips *et al.*, 1996), **commitment to the supervisee** (Lennox *et al.*, 2008 e Myall *et al.*, 2008), **communicator** Gray & Smith 2000; Marshall & Gordon, 2005; O'Malley *et al.*, 2000; Philips *et al.*, 1996 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **reliable person** (Abreu, 2007; Gray & Smith, 2000; Hughes, 2004; Marshal & Gordon, 2005; Morse, 2006; Philips *et al.*, 1996; Rankin, 1991; Vance, 2000 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **adviser** (Abreu, 2007; Ali Pa, 2008; Darling, 1984; Hodges, 2009; Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000; Rankin, 1991 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **innovator** (Abreu, 2007; Alarcão e Tavares, 2003; Cruz, 2006; Darling, 1984; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hodges, 2009 e Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003), **available** (Abreu, 2007; Cruz, 2006; Darling, 1984; Hodges, 2009; Hughes, 2004 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **empathic** (Abreu, 2007; Cottrell, 2002; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hagler, 1991 cit in Cottrell, 2002; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986 e Jardim, 2007), **enthusiast** (Abreu, 2007; Darling, 1984; Gray & Smith, 2000; Hodges, 2009; Marshal & Gordon, 2005; Myall *et al.*, 2008 e Philips *et al.*, 1996), **motivating** (Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Kilcullen, 2007; Marshall & Gordon, 2005; Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **guide** (Abreu, 2007; Ali Pa, 2008; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Darling, 1984; Hodges, 2009; Kilcullen, 2007; Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **leader** (Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Jardim, 2007; Kilcullen, 2007; O'Malley *et al.*, 2000 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **monitor** (Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Cottrell, 2002; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hagler, 1991 cit in Cottrell, 2002; Kilcullen, 2007 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **organized** (Ali Pa, 2008; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Marshall & Gordon, 2005; Morton-Cooper & Palmer 2000; Philips *et al.*, 1996), **orientation** (Abreu, 2007; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Rankin, 1991; Sá-Chaves, 2000; Smedley *et al.*, 2010 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **patient** (Abreu, 2007; Ali Pa, 2008; Cottrell, 2002; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Hagler, 1991 cit in Cottrell, 2002; Hughes, 2004; Philips *et al.*, 1996; Marshal & Gordon, 2005 e Munsom, 2002), **planner** (Abreu, 2007; Ali Pa, 2008; Darling, 1984; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hodges, 2009; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Morton-Cooper & Palmer 2000; Munsom, 2002; Nunes 2007; Pollard & Trigs, 1997), **teacher** (Alarcão e Tavares, 2003; Ali Pa, 2008; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Kilcullen, 2007; Lemos *et al.*, 2009; Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **professional** (Abreu, 2007; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick 2008; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Gray & Smith, 2000; Kilcullen, 2007; Marshal & Gordon, 2005; O'Malley *et al.*, 2000; Philips *et al.*, 1996; Rankin, 1991; Smedley *et al.*, 2010 e Washington, 1997 cit in Abreu 2007), **resourcefulness** (Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Cruz, 2006; Kilcullen 2007; Nunes 2007; Pollard & Trigs, 1997 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **reflection** (Alarcão e Tavares, 2003; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Cruz, 2006; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Holloway, 1995; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Kilcullen, 2007; Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **resilience** (Jardim, 2007), **problem solver** (Abreu, 2007; Alarcão e Tavares, 2003; Ali Pa, 2008; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Darling, 1984; Hodges, 2009; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Kilcullen, 2007; Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000; Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **being respectful** (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986 e Myall *et al.*, 2008), **being responsible** (Abreu, 2007; Darling, 1984; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hodges 2009 e Hoy & Forsyth, 1986), **being supportive** (Abreu, 2007; Case di Leonardi & Gulanick, 2008; Darling, 1984; Fernandez *et al.*, 2005; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Hodges, 2009; Jardim, 2007; Kilcullen, 2007 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010), **team work** (Alarcão & Tavares, 2003; Cruz, 2006; Dalzell *et al.*, 2007; Garrido *et al.*, 2008; Munson, 2002 e Nerici, 1985 cit in Alarcão & Tavares 2003), **coach** (Ali Pa, 2008; Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2000 e Smedley *et al.*, 2010) and **volunteer** (Lennox *et al.*, 2008).

The inventory has a Lickert scale (1-5) that ranges from between “not suitable” to “very suitable”.

## 2. The panel of experts and the inventory (SLISCY)

The quality of training and teaching of students in higher education is essential to build a profession with flexible and competent professionals.

In Portugal, the deaf community was recognized in 1997 (Portuguese Republic Constitution, article 74º h)) and as we mentioned before, only in 1999 the Portuguese government regulated the profession, demanding interpreters to have a bachelor degree in translation and interpretation in Portuguese sign language to be able to exercise.

Nowadays, in our Country, we only have three colleges that have graduation and one of the colleges has the master degree in translation and interpretation in Portuguese sign language.

To face the challenges that graduation in Portuguese sign language translation and interpretation has, it is implied that we considered the supervisors who interact with the students in the practice setting. They play an important role in the teaching learning process of the supervisees; it's through this relationship that the student experiences what is needed to be an interpreter.

As we intend to identify the sign language interpreter students' supervisor profile from the experts' perspective, we choose to apply a modified Delphi technique. To be part of the panel of experts the participants needed to be or had been supervisors with graduation in this specific area and attending the master degree in this area. We carried out the research in Oporto Education College – which is the only college in the country that has both degrees.

Permission from Oporto Education College was obtained. We outlined the voluntary nature of the participation and we explained the study and the ethical issues that we were going to respect, such as, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

We distributed the SLISCY to the 18 supervisors that were attending the master degree. They returned 12 inventories in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, which corresponds to a response rate of 66,7%; and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round they returned 10 inventories but we only considered 9, totalizing 50% of the interpreters.

The relevant socio demographic data is shown in table 1.

Table 1 – Socio demographic data of the experts

	1st round			2nd round		
	N	Mean	(Sd) <sup>1</sup>	N	Mean	(Sd)
Age (years)	12	28	(4,7)	9	27	(3,5)
Time as an interpreter (years)	12	7	(4,8)	9	5	(2,6)
Time as supervisor (years)	11	2	(2,1)	9	2	(2,1)

<sup>1</sup>(Sd) – Standard deviation

The average age of the experts was 28 years in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and 27 years in the second. The average time as an interpreter was 7 years in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and 5 years in the 2<sup>nd</sup> one and for the time as a supervisor, the average was 2 years in both rounds.

## 2.1 1<sup>st</sup> ROUND

The inventory was distributed to all supervisors attending the master degree in translation and interpretation in Portuguese sign language, which totalizes 18 interpreters but only 12 inventories were filled in.

In the following table we present the answers given by the experts about the competencies that should constitute the supervisor's profile.

Table 2 – Absolute and relative frequency of SLISCY in the 1<sup>st</sup> round

Competencies	Not suitable		Less suitable		Suitable		Well suitable		Very suitable	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Being helpful	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	6	(50)	3	(25)
Being updated	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	2	(16,7)	9	(75)
Safe environment	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	3	(25)	6	(50)	2	(16,7)
Articulation between cultures	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	5	(41,7)	6	(50)
Theoretical articulation of practice knowledge	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(33,3)	1	(8,3)	7	(58,3)

Assertiveness	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	4	(33,3)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)
Self Criticism	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	4	(33,3)	5	(41,5)
Self Esteem	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	7	(58,3)	3	(25)	1	(8,3)
Evaluation	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(16,7)	4	(33,3)	6	(50)
Listener	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	6	(50)	3	(25)
Collaboration	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	4	(33,3)	5	(41,7)
Gesture performance	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	10	(83,3)
Being understanding	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	5	(41,7)	5	(41,7)	1	(8,3)
Commitment to the supervisee	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	6	(50)	3	(25)
Communicator	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)	4	(33,3)
Reliable person	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)	4	(33,3)
Adviser	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	4	(33,3)	5	(41,7)
Innovator	0	(0)	2	(16,7)	3	(25)	5	(41,7)	2	(16,7)
Available	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	2	(16,7)	9	(75)
Empathic	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(50)	3	(25)	3	(25)
Enthusiast	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	1	(8,3)	9	(75)	1	(8,3)
Motivating	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	3	(25)	2	(16,7)	6	(50)
Guide	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)	5	(41,7)
Leader	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	4	(33,3)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)
Monitor	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	3	(25)	8	(66,7)
Organized	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	3	(25)	6	(50)	2	(16,7)
Orientation	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(33,3)	8	(66,7)
Patient	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	6	(50)	5	(41,7)	0	(0)
Planner	1	(8,3)	2	(16,7)	4	(33,3)	3	(25)	2	(16,7)
Teacher	0	(0)	3	(25)	7	(58,3)	1	(8,3)	1	(8,3)
Professional	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	5	(41,7)	7	(58,3)
Resourcefulness	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(16,7)	7	(58,3)	3	(25)
Reflection	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(33,3)	5	(41,7)	3	(25)
Resilience	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	7	(58,3)	2	(16,7)
Problem solver	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(25)	5	(41,7)	4	(33,3)
Being respectful	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	7	(58,3)	4	(33,3)
Being responsible	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(50)	6	(50)
Being supportive	0	(0)	3	(25)	1	(8,3)	5	(41,7)	3	(25)
Team work	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	0	(0)	11	(91,7)
Coach	0	(0)	1	(8,3)	2	(16,7)	5	(41,7)	4	(33,3)
Volunteer	0	(0)	3	(25)	5	(41,7)	3	(25)	1	(8,3)
Others	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)

From the analysis of table 2, we found that the experts considered all competencies suitable and did not add any other competence. Competencies like “team work” and “gesture performance” were considered the most important competencies in the supervisor’s profile. Those competencies obtained 91,7% and 83,3% as “very suitable”.

The competencies “guide”, “professional” and “responsibility” obtained 100% of consensus as “well suitable” or “very suitable”.

Competencies such as “being helpful”, “being updated”, “articulation between cultures”, “self criticism”, “evaluation”, “listener”, “collaboration”, “commitment to the supervisee”, “adviser”, “available”, “enthusiast”, “monitor”, “resourcefulness”, “resilience”, “problem solver”, “being respectful” and “coach” were considered “suitable” or well suitable” by at least 75% of the experts.

All members of the panel of experts considered that the competencies “theoretical articulation of practice knowledge”, “empathic”, “guide” and “reflection”, were suitable to the supervisor because none of them were considered as “not suitable” or “less suitable”.

The competence “teacher” was considered “less suitable” by 25% of experts, and it was considered as “suitable” by 58,3% of the experts, which totalizes 83,3% of the participants; 8,3% considered this competence as “well suitable” and 8,3% considered as “very suitable”.

## 2.2 2<sup>nd</sup> ROUND

In this round only 10 inventories were filled in but we only considered 9 because one of the participants had not cooperated in the 1<sup>st</sup> round therefore we eliminated it.

In the second round we explained to the experts that the inventory for this round was ordered according to the scores obtained in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, and at this stage it was necessary to validate the information provided.

The results are shown in table 3.

**Table 3 - Absolute and relative frequency of SLISCY in the 2<sup>st</sup> round**

Competencies	Disagree		Agree	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Team work	0	(0)	9	(100)
Orientation	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Being updated	0	(0)	9	(100)
Gesture performance	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Available	0	(0)	9	(100)
Monitor	0	(0)	9	(100)
Professional	0	(0)	9	(100)
Articulation between cultures	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Being responsible	0	(0)	9	(100)
Theoretical articulation of practice knowledge	0	(0)	9	(100)
Self Criticism	0	(0)	9	(100)
Evaluation	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Adviser	0	(0)	9	(100)
Being respectful	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Collaboration	0	(0)	9	(100)
Motivating	0	(0)	9	(100)

Problem solver	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Guide	0	(0)	9	(100)
Resourcefulness	0	(0)	9	(100)
Coach	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Being helpful	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Listener	0	(0)	9	(100)
Commitment to the supervisee	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Communicator	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Reliable person	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Reflexive	0	(0)	9	(100)
Resilience	0	(0)	9	(100)
Empathic	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Enthusiast	0	(0)	9	(100)
Being supportive	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Safe environment	1	(11,1)	8	(88,9)
Assertiveness	0	(0)	9	(100)
Organized	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Leader	4	(44,4)	5	(55,5)
Innovator	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Being understanding	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Self Esteem	2	(22,2)	7	(77,8)
Patient	0	(0)	9	(100)
Volunteer	3	(33,3)	6	(66,6)
Planner	3	(33,3)	6	(66,6)
Teacher	3	(33,3)	6	(66,6)
Others	0	(0)	0	(0)

The panel of experts validated all the competencies in the order they were presented.

Concerning the competence “teacher”, we asked the experts if “the competence teacher was less suitable”. Only 3 of them agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as it can be verified in table 4.

**Table 4 – Absolute frequency of the adequacy of the “teacher” competence**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
Statement	N	N	N	N	N
The competence “teacher” is less suitable	1	4	1	2	1

Two rounds were necessary to achieve the sign language interpreters’ students supervisors profile from the experts’ perspective, which is similar to other studies. Wriht & Giovinazzo (2000) note that at least 2 rounds are necessary to implement the Delphi technique and that is atypical studies with more than 3 rounds of questionnaires.

Hasson & Keeney (2011) share this opinion and refer that the Delphi technique “may employ fewer than 3 rounds panellists provided with pre-selected items, drawn from various sources, within which they are asked to consider their responses” (p. 1697).

## Final Considerations

Being a Portuguese sign language interpreter means to be prepared to face the most diversified work scenarios, therefore to be a student’s supervisor requires from this professional a profile of competencies as diverse as possible. This is also the understanding of our panel of experts. They achieved that the 41 competencies presented were the appropriate ones for the sign language interpreters’ students supervisors profile, and they didn’t add any other competence.

However we must note the importance they gave to some competencies such as “team work” and “gesture performance” - which is specific in this field.

Supervisors must have “gesture performance” because they are a resource and a role model for supervisees. Not every interpreter can be a supervisor, they are responsible for the students’ teaching-learning process and for that they are obliged to be an example of what professionals should be like without forgetting their pedagogical role.

Ali Pa (2008) says that the supervisor is someone that assumes multiple roles along the supervision process, according the development of the supervisee. Ramsey (2011) states that “good supervisors have to be passionate about their work, their organization and their product or service in order to instill passion and commitment in their staff, team or crew members (...) with passion, they can become inspirational leaders who get remarkable results” (p. 10).

It is our understanding, that all parts should be heard, like the coordinators of the graduation and the master degree as well as the students, because they are the ones who are supervised; they are engaged in a teaching-learning process facing difficulties and needs from a different perspective than the supervisor. Therefore we will continue to carry out this study. In its second phase we will interview the coordinators and the supervisees that belong to the Oporto Education College and in the third phase we will apply to a focus group methodology. Thus we will be able to identify the supervisor’s profile that takes into account the supervisees’ needs in the practice setting.

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