Embracing the Next Generation of Interpreters: A Call to Action for the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

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Abstract

The founding members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) felt strongly about recruiting, training, and confirming the competence of interpreters. As a result, RID has been the national leader for the profession of American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreting for over 50 years. At the same time, the next generation of ASL-English interpreters face challenges pertaining to pre-service education, practicum experiences, and professional support after graduation as they enter the field. This article describes these challenges and recommends that RID make proactive investments in this next generation of interpreters that will improve the quality of services provided to stakeholders and empower a stronger network of new professionals connected to and engaged in the preservation and furtherance of RID's vital legacy.

INTRODUCTION

The future of the American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreting profession depends on successfully recruiting, training, and confirming the competence of the next generation of interpreters (Fant, 1990). During a time of societal upheaval and rapid social and technological change, the continued relevancy of the national interpreting organization – the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) – is jointly in the hands of those who are currently serving and the new professionals entering the field. Many are looking for RID to lead in providing creative solutions to the challenges facing new interpreters. RID must address pressing issues that affect the interpreting field and stakeholders with whom they serve, such as the current national discussion over pre-service learning toward certification, isolated working environments, and the horizontal violence that creates division within the profession.

BACKGROUND

As we look to the future of the interpreting profession, we benefit from a look at our past. A historical view allows us to identify the origins of many current perceptions about this complex practice profession. Understanding these perceptions provides a perspective that allows the interpreting field to improve professional practice, interpersonal relationships, and organizational culture. It is because of the rich shared history and values provided by the members of RID that we look towards ensuring an even stronger future for the next generation of interpreters.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The RID is a national organization in the United States which was established in 1964. Publications (Fant, 1990; Cokely, 2005; Ball, 2013) have noted that the establishment of this organization marked the beginning of the interpreting profession. RID was originally established to maintain a list of people who self-identified as able to provide sign language interpreting services. Fant (1990) noted that the founding members shared a sense of eagerness to recruit, train, and confirm the qualifications of interpreters.

Historically, members of the Deaf community served as gatekeepers to the profession as they were qualified to determine whether or not an individual possessed sufficient ASL skills and were competent in determining whether a person would act in the best communicative interest of the Deaf Community (Fant, 1990; Cokely, 2005). In the early days, most people providing interpreting services were related to members of the Deaf community, which provided them a strong, direct connection and sense of value for Deaf people, ASL, and the work of interpreting (Fant, 1990). When RID was first formed, those who wished to be placed on the Registry would "secure the signatures of two RID members to support the claim" of interpreting competence (Fant, 1990, p. 41). This provided peer validation for interpreting skills. At that time, most members were skilled interpreters or sophisticated consumers, who frequently were educators at Deaf institutions and thus familiar with assessing language skills (Fant, 1990, Cokely, 2005). As membership grew, the RID had to determine how to recruit, train, and create a more formal assessment of interpreting skills.

INTERPRETER EDUCATION

While RID was gaining a national foothold, there was simultaneously a growth in the need for interpreters. The passing of laws such as the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965 (PL 89-333), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), the Federal Court Interpreters Act (PL 95-539), the Telecommunications Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 increased access for users of ASL resulting in more requests for interpreting services (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005). Fant (1990) and Ball (2013) noted in their review of historical events in the interpreting field that it was around this time that it was clear that training was needed for individuals wishing to enter the interpreting profession. In 1974, ten years after the establishment of RID, the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) began funding training programs with the goal of developing and implementing training courses for individuals who were already fluent in ASL, but lacked prior interpreting experience (Cokely, 2005; Frishberg, 1990). The goal of these training programs was to increase the pool of work-ready interpreters. Due to the lack of research available at the time, training programs were developed with varying content, durations, and approaches (Fant, 1990; Cokely, 2005). The focus of these programs was aimed at expedient outcomes. Some programs were as short as a weekend, while others might have been as long as six weeks in length (Fant 1990; Cokely, 2005). Over time, two-year technical-vocational training programs were developed and as students arrived at community colleges without any prior ASL skills, they joined programs designed to teach them both a second language (ASL) and interpreting skills in a relatively short period of time (Ball, 2013; Fant 1990). Overall, this new approach lacked the same rigor that prospective interpreters would have received in earlier times from interactions and relationships within the Deaf community (Cokely, 2005).

During the 1980s, the number of training programs increased to over fifty (Cokely, 2005). At that time, interpreter educators determined that these skills-focused training programs should incorporate liberal arts education in addition to comprehensive language and interpreting skills training (Cokely, 2005; Boegner Godfrey, 2010). ASL-English interpreting programs increasingly adapted to a new student base who did not consistently have ties with the Deaf community, and often possessed minimal or no ASL competence. These students then required additional extensive language instruction in addition to learning knowledge and skills needed to effectively interpret (Fant, 1990; Cokely, 2005). As academic institutions increasingly took more of the responsibility for admission screening, the Deaf community's previous role as gatekeepers to the profession was significantly reduced (Cokely, 2005).

Over time, stakeholders and educators observed outcomes of two-year programs and noted that two years was an insufficient amount of time for students to develop necessary ASL competence as well as skills needed to interpret between ASL and English. These anecdotal observations were then verified by research (Humphrey, 2000; Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Cokely, 2005) followed by the development of four-year degree programs (Humphrey, 2000; Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Boegner Godfrey, 2010). This trades-based approach to "interpreting training" then shifted to "interpreter education" which provided an important academic perspective to developing students into professional practitioners (Winston & Monikowski, 2013; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005). Witter-Merithew & Johnson (2005) reported that interpreting students recognized the value of a four-year education and stated that "interpreter education should be housed in university settings and offered at a baccalaureate degree level as warranted by the course of study… [the students] perceived that a baccalaureate degree was more consistent with society's expectation for a professional practitioner versus a paraprofessional practitioner" (p. 49).

By 2012, the RID required all candidates for certification to have completed a four-year degree prior to being allowed to sit for the performance component of the national certification exam. This was an important move towards validating the need for a higher standard for interpreters entering the field; however, the requirement was not discipline-specific as is expected of other practice professions. While this has led to some students pursuing a four-year degree in interpreting, many others have instead chosen to complete a four-year degree in an area unrelated to ASL-English interpreting (Winston & Monikowski, 2013). While this requirement might increase the world knowledge of an interpreter entering the profession, there is no evidence of increased cultural knowledge or linguistic skills specific to ASL-English interpreting. Adding a four-year degree requirement to certification might have provided some benefits by improving general public perception of the profession and contributing to increased wages for interpreters, however, there has been no research evidence that a general non-specific four-year degree improves the quality of interpreting services.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NEXT GENERATION OF INTERPRETERS

There are currently at least three significant challenges faced by the next generation of interpreters. The first challenge faced by the interpreting field is that interpreting students continue to graduate lacking the language fluency, knowledge, and skills they need for certified, competent, autonomous practice (Garrett & Girardin, 2019; Johnson, et. al., 2018; Boegner Godfrey, 2010; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005 & 2004). Next, many current interpreting students and recently

graduated interpreters are working in isolation without an established connection to the Deaf community or interpreting profession (O'Reagan, 2019, Johnson, et. al., 2018; Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Witter-Merithew, 2012; Cokely, 2005). Finally, interpreting students are often exposed to intense student competition during their education and experience an overly critical perspective of the field during their interactions with working interpreters, which often follows them into the field and contributes to burn out (Ott, 2012; Block, 2015).

CHALLENGE #1: LACK OF SKILLS NEEDED TO EARN CERTIFICATION

Recent reports (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; Boegner Godfrey, 2010), multiple calls to action (Volk, 2014; Cokely, 2005), and other recent publications (Garrett & Girardin, 2019; Johnson, et. al., 2018) all make a clear case that a major challenge faced by the next generation of interpreters is a lack of language fluency and a gap in foundational knowledge and skills needed to achieve certification. There is currently no evidence of consistency in the education of interpreters beyond programs that have been accredited according to the standards established by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE).

Winston (2005), Cokely (2005), and Witter-Merithew & Johnson (2005) have consistently noted how stakeholders are negatively impacted by the fact that many new graduates of interpreting programs are not able to provide effective entry-level interpreting services, as evidenced by their inability to obtain interpreting certification. This inevitably leads to interpreters being hired to provide professional interpreting services without holding national certification. This gap between graduating and earning interpreter certification often causes graduates to take interpreting assignments before they have demonstrated that they possess the skills needed for the work. In a recent national survey of educational interpreters, "approximately one-quarter (23%) of respondents reported that they were hired to work as K-12 interpreters prior to *beginning* [emphasis ours] their interpreter education" (Johnson, et al, 2018, p. 89). In essence, this means that interpreters are learning on the job, while Deaf people, including Deaf and hard of hearing students in classrooms, miss out on essential educational content and are also often misrepresented (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005).

CHALLENGE #2: WORKING IN ISOLATION

Another challenge faced by the next generation of interpreters is working in isolation. Most interpreters frequently work alone, receive little to no supervision in the workplace, and feel a lack of connection with RID. Witter-Merithew (2012) describes it this way: "We often function as silos – each doing our own thing without connection to others, who do our work for long periods of time" (para. 2). This isolation is especially detrimental to new graduates who still require supervision along with professional and collegial supportive working relationships that might assist in earning national certification. In a recent interview with juniors and seniors[1] from a CCIE-accredited program, one shared, "Throughout my four years in school, I've received support from the instructors, advisors, staff members, and even my cohort, yet as I prepare to graduate, I'm not

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[1] Names withheld for confidentiality purposes.

sure what support system exists for new interpreter graduates" (personal communication, February 2020).

Interpreting supervision and evaluation opportunities are extremely limited because interpreters frequently work independently, without the presence of other interpreters or supervisors. Interpreters in rural areas are especially challenged as they do not have ready access to other interpreters (Witter-Merithew, 2012). Interpreters in urban areas might not have it much better as there is scant evidence of supervision opportunities for those who work in metropolitan areas as independent contractors. While many agencies evaluate a new interpreter's initial entry requirements, what supervision is provided beyond that? Some agencies obtain feedback from Deaf and hearing consumers. Unfortunately, most non-Deaf consumers do not possess the knowledge, skills or training to truly assess an interpreter's work (Johnson, et al, 2018; Witter-Merithew, 2012). While many consumers, Deaf and non-Deaf, can certainly assess the fluency and cultural appropriateness of the respective target language, they might not have access to know what source language information the interpreter might have mistakenly omitted or altered. This challenge exists in educational settings as well, as supervisors assigned to conduct an evaluation of a classroom interpreter are often professionals outside the field of interpreting, such as principals or special education directors, who often do not know ASL (Johnson, et al, 2018; Witter-Merithew, 2012).

There is a desire among those entering the profession for networking opportunities through a national organization, with conferences and other professional development activities, that could significantly reduce the isolation that many interpreters experience (Johnson, et al, 2018). The RID currently has the Student Member Section; however, interaction seems minimal. The Facebook page for this section had 339 members as of February 2020 but showed very limited activity. This limited connection with student membership may relate to the decrease in RID student membership. In the two years between RID's 2016 Annual Report and 2018 Annual Report there was a significant drop of 469 student members[2].

RID took steps toward welcoming the next generation of interpreters at the 2019 national conference through the *Cokely Café*, "a space for our next generation to gather and ask a myriad of questions…and honestly, the most important thing, [hear that] we value you! You are so important to us! You are our next generation!" (O'Regan, 2019, para. 4). However, only 25 of the 984 published student members of RID attended this event. This means that only 0.02% of all student members were represented.

CHALLENGE #3: INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONFLICT

The third challenge experienced by the next generation of interpreters lies in intergenerational communication conflict. Some sociologists refer to this as "horizontal violence" defined as "a broad range of antagonism, including gossiping, criticism, innuendo, scapegoating, undermining, intimidation, passive aggression, withholding information, insubordination, and verbal and physical aggression" (Ott, 2012, p. 14). Ott (2012) investigated the ways that newer interpreters experienced negative interactions and questioned if it was based on level of experience. Consistent

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[2] At the time of this writing, February 2020, the 2019 Annual Report was not yet available.

with the literature on horizontal violence, Ott (2012) verified through qualitative research that this conflict begins during interpreter education. An interview included a description of a new interpreter's first experience with intergenerational communication conflict:

> "Throughout school and practicum, it is very disheartening to be called 'babies' to indicate our immaturity in the field and then be able to consider yourself a professional, in both your own and others' eyes once graduation has happened. Due to this, the level of trust with more experienced interpreters, for me at least, is nil" (p. 59).

Smith (2015) also addressed this in her article *Accountability: A First Step to Harmony Among Sign Language Interpreters,* where she reminded the field of the responsibility to mend the discord rather than grow the great divide:

> "I have heard the phrase 'Certified Interpreters eat their young' more than once. While we may joke about this phrase, there are novice sign language interpreters who are afraid to reach out because they feel this statement is true…We need to acknowledge when the novice interpreter is trying to follow the rules and be patient while they continue to advance their skills and knowledge. We are setting the standard those novice interpreters will one day follow" (para. 7-8)

Kent (2015) made a case for the fact that the sign language interpreting profession continues in a lengthy stage of organizational "adolescence" as evidenced by the problematic behaviors of both new and existing interpreters which she referred to as the "oppression-social justice pressure cooker." This interpersonal dynamic among interpreters may be one of the reasons RID is seeing a significant drop in student membership. Students may feel less of a connection with RID, which in turn lowers their motivation to attend national and regional conferences or pursue national certification, and also degrades trust in experienced interpreters around them. As individual states continue to recognize other interpreter certification options, these new interpreters might migrate in directions other than RID.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

It seems many interpreters may have forgotten the joy the founding members of RID shared in recruiting, training, and confirming the competence of interpreters (Fant, 1990). With a desire to support the continued work and growth of RID, the authors propose the following recommendations to address the aforementioned challenges and change the culture of our field for the next generation of interpreters.

RECOMMENDATION #1: SPECIFY THE DEGREE

In order to begin addressing the first challenge of interpreting program graduates lacking the language, knowledge, and skills they need for certified, competent, autonomous practice, RID should consider a change in the degree requirement from a four-year degree in any subject to a discipline-specific four-year degree.

The literature addressing academic requirements for entering the interpreting profession goes back more than forty years. As far back as 1979, the debate centered around whether interpreter education should be a bachelor's or master's degree program. (Ball, 2013). The current lack of a required discipline-specific four-year degree means that new graduates are pursuing

interpreting work without a consistent language, knowledge, and skills foundation. This may be one of the reasons that RID is reporting that only 27% of those who take the performance exam are passing (RID, 2018).

Many current interpreting students graduate from a two-year interpreting program and then finish up a four-year degree in general studies. While world knowledge may increase with this additional education, and likely contributes to greater understanding of source language content and context, there has yet to be any research demonstrating that this academic path improves the language competency or interpreting skills of these graduates. A recent quantitative research study provided evidence that challenged interpreter educators and credentialing bodies to question the validity and effectiveness of two-year programs (Garrett & Girardin, 2019). This study compared ASL competence between graduates of two-year interpreting degree programs and students who had completed four semesters of ASL (ASL I-IV) from across the country over an eight-year span and found minimal difference in ASL production skills between these two groups. In other words, students who have completed ASL I-IV and students who have graduated from a two-year interpreting program have almost the same level of ASL production skills.[3] The data from Garrett and Girardin's study (2019) aligns with findings from earlier research (Boegner Godfrey, 2010; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005) indicating that graduates from two-year interpreting degrees are in fact more unlikely to achieve certification upon graduation than graduates from a four-year program.

Along the same lines, Boegner Godfrey's (2010) study considered the knowledge and skills students obtained in two-year versus four-year interpreting programs. Boegner Godfrey (2010) found that the majority of graduates from four-year interpreting programs would obtain state-level credentials upon graduation in states that offered state certification, and the same students might take up to one year to earn national credentials. In contrast, graduates from two-year interpreting programs typically required two additional years to obtain state-level certification and often more than that to earn national certification (Boegner Godfrey, 2010).

Most practice professions in the U.S. offer structures for various levels of preparation and expertise. Careers in medicine, mental health, nursing, law, education, accounting, and social work have clearly defined levels of professional work that are typically identified by labels that correspond to the amount of education completed along with certification and/or licensure. Typically, those with a certificate or two-year degree are categorized as paraprofessionals, those with four-year degrees as generalist professionals, and those with graduate degrees as specialist professionals (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005). In these practice professions where there are various levels of degrees and certifications, the certifying body identifies expected outcomes depending on the degree earned (Ball, 2013; Schumacher & Risco, 2017). Many states and some national certifying bodies offer these types of levels for ASL-English interpreters and provide certification candidates with clearly defined expected outcomes, access to either rubrics or

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[3] It is important to note most two-year interpreting programs are constrained by a structure and system that typically creates academic schedules and curricula requiring students to work on ASL language development at the same time as being required to develop interpreting skills. Yet, catalogs from two-year interpreting degree programs often claim that graduates are effectively prepared for entry-level interpreting work, and that they can confidently approach the national certification test.

domains assessed with expected levels of performance. Interpreting program graduates, interpreter educators, stakeholders, including state regulators, have long requested transparency of RID's certification standards. Moving towards an accredited testing system would lead to this level of transparency and likely and contribute to longer sustainability of the organization. As more states implement levels of credentials, RID would benefit by conducting a national investigation of stakeholder perspectives surrounding the notion of offering levels of credentials with corresponding education and skills requirements.

Thirty years ago, Fant (1990) challenged the interpreting field to conduct research to aid in the development of interpreter programs:

> How can we prepare interpreters for their work when we know so little about what skills are needed? Even if we knew that much, how can we know the best way to develop those skills without research? Without a body of knowledge supported by research and confirmed by practice, we will continue to fall short of the professionalization we seek in our field" (p. 48).

These multiple research studies, along with standards typical to other practice professions, provide RID with the justification to require a four-year discipline-specific degree in ASL-English interpretation in order for students to possess the necessary foundational language fluency, knowledge, and skills to sit for the national performance exam. This is one way the interpreting field can prepare new interpreters for success, by increasing the confidence of new graduates in their readiness to approach national assessments and begin employment.

RECOMMENDATION #2: INCREASE COLLABORATION BETWEEN RID AND CIT

Fant (1990) challenged both the RID and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) to work together to develop and revise curricula. While this partnership is formally noted within RID's commitment to their mission, the collaboration may not be evident to membership (RID, n.d.). For example, the CCIE accreditation is supposed to provide "validation that graduates have received training and education based on national standards" and "ensures that curriculum follows best practices and meets national standards" (CCIE, 2018, para. 4, 8). However, it remains unclear if the national standards set forth by CCIE align with the expectations of the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpreting (CASLI). The RID performance exam is proprietary and protecting the content of the exam is of utmost importance. The lack of transparency evidenced through unpublished or hidden testing constructs, defies every expectation of effective and credible testing. Failing to share these expected domains and levels of performance leaves educators and interpreters, both experienced and novice, with an unclear understanding of expectations and outcomes, while RID maintains complete autocratic control of who may or may not be allowed to gain a credential. Further, until RID/CASLI shares some information on domains and benchmarks, interpreter education programs will continue to lack knowledge of the necessary learning objectives to prepare students appropriately to successfully pass national certification assessments. Collaboration between CIT/CCIE and RID/CASLI could make a considerable impact toward closing the gap between graduation and certification. In addition, this level of collaboration could lead to stronger partnerships between RID and state agencies which continue to look to other resources for verifying interpreting skills.

An approach worth consideration is to post example videos of candidates who successfully passed a recent iteration of national certification. The American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI), owned and administered by Gallaudet University, offers this type of information through a webpage that includes videos showing ASL users communicating at each level of ASLPI proficiency. Other assessments, universities, and organizations also provide samples of levels. Until there is a clear communication of domains and benchmarks for successfully passing the national interpreter exam, interpreter educators and their students lack a clear understanding of what is expected.

RID/CASLI and CIT/CCIE collaboration could lead to a clear correlation between CCIE standards and the RID national assessment. In turn, interpreter educators could better prepare students to earn national certification more quickly, which would better the national certification pass rate, currently at 27% (RID, 2018). Enhanced partnership between interpreter educators and the certifying body could also build greatly needed bridges within the field. Today's students have wide access to public disagreements and conflict, but seeing their faculty actively contributing to solving some of the issues faced by RID would likely encourage those students to stay engaged in the community and be part of the solution.

RECOMMENDATION #3: CREATE FORMAL INDUCTION AND SUPERVISION SYSTEMS

Most interpreter training programs have implemented some form of observation-supervision instructional approaches. For example, Robyn Dean and Robert Pollard's (2009) Demand-Control Schema was piloted through a grant-funded project and demonstrated the effectiveness of structured supervision approaches, in particular in mental health settings. This is one example of a kind of educational experience that creates a foundation for new graduates to enter the profession with the ability to analyze an interpreted scenario through the various perspectives of the parties involved including that of the professional interpreter. This leads into what should be a post-graduation professional induction along with ongoing supervised practice. In their 2015 report on the work of the National Interpreter Education Center regarding emerging trends in interpreting and the implications for interpreter education, one of the recommendations outlined by Cogen & Cokely (2015) included, "Formal, low-risk pathways for novice interpreters to enter the field with support and supervision" (p. 31).

Other practice professions have established significant support structures for in-depth induction for new professionals as they begin their careers. Support is then continued through ongoing supervision. These kind of supervision practices, structures and systems have been in place for hundreds of years for social work fields and since the early days of psychotherapy. Researchers have unearthed evidence of supervision practices for social work dating to 1788 in Hamburg, Germany, nursing supervision practices dating to 1860 in London, and psychotherapy supervision to 1902 in Vienna (White & Winstanley, 2014).

Supervision is an educational process that psychotherapy scholar Edward Watkins (2011) describes as "a passionate and impassioned learning process that is infused with and punctuated by faith, hope, awe and wonder about the possibilities of being and becoming a psychotherapist" (p. 193). Watkins (2011) describes a transformative process whereby supervisors embrace and empower the potential of each person they supervise toward developing professional competence and independence. For those who wish to become psychotherapists, supervision is the primary educational means to "teach, transmit, and perpetuate the traditions, practice and culture of

psychotherapy" (Watkins, 2011, p. 194). Supervision allows for transmission of what we value most, provides a rapid response to evolving needs and expectations within the profession, allows for development of specific competencies, and provides greater accountability. Supervision creates a learning alliance relationship between the supervisor and supervisee and when done well, with clear goals and expectations of both parties, leads to supportive professional relationships that last many years and encourage best professional practices.

Creating a national supervision system could lead to an emergence of interpreters with much stronger skills as well as more cultural awareness, sensitivity, and behaviors. In addition, the positive relationship built between seasoned interpreters and emerging interpreters could transform the national rhetoric regarding interpreters' interpersonal relationships, as well as their relationship with the RID. Such supervision would enhance professional functioning and provide a monitoring process that provides greater stakeholder protections. Researchers in the psychotherapy field have identified supervision as the "single most important contributor for training effectiveness" (Gonsalvez & Milne, 2010, p. 233) and cite it as "unparalleled in its power and potential to prepare budding therapists for practice and assist more advanced therapists to further develop their treatment skills" (Watkins, 2014, p. 141).

Professional supervision requires working with interpreter educators, training current highly skilled interpreters how to effectively supervise, and an oversight process to provide accountability. Beginning with interpreter education programs, this could produce enormous dividends in bringing together current interpreter practitioners, Deaf community members, interpreter educators, and future interpreters toward the shared goal of improving the language fluency, knowledge, and skills of new interpreters. RID is in a position to lead such a movement that would positively engage stakeholders at all levels. New interpreters would receive much-needed induction and supervision support. Experienced Deaf and hearing interpreters, as well as language specialists, would receive training in leadership and supervision and would be exposed to more opportunities to boost their professional growth and income potential.

In addition to raising language fluency, knowledge, and skills, these supervisory relationships often lead to positive, far-reaching interpersonal relationships. While horizontal violence stories and experiences cause some to fear supervision, "Catalano and Tillie (1991) found that teachers at all levels who participated in supervision and mentorship felt more engaged, connected, and empowered to develop as professionals" (in Ott, 2012, p. 83). When the RID was first established, new interpreters found affirmation through current members that encouraged them to join RID and continue the legacy (Fant, 1990). Supervision could provide a vehicle for RID to attract new interpreters, retain current ones, and engage stakeholders. While students may not have the financial resources to attend a national conference, low or no-cost webinars for students and recent graduates to connect them to a supervision network might be better attended and more effective.

Finally, as more states move to recognize certifications and interpreter skills assessments other than what is offered by RID, supervision systems are still not currently in place aside from required continuing education unit requirements tracking. Should RID offer a system for supervision that leads to increased skills and greater accountability, individual states would likely be interested in investing resources toward collaborative partnerships for this service.

CONCLUSION

While it is a monumental task to learn a second language to fluency and then learn to interpret between two languages, students are accomplishing this and graduating and becoming professional interpreters. The challenges faced by recent graduates are not new. The graduation to certification gap, isolated working conditions, and intergenerational communication conflict are three areas which have been part of our collective knowledge and discussions for quite some time. The recommendations outlined above will lead us toward the transformative professional process described by Watkins (2011) that is infused with faith, hope, awe and wonder while empowering the potential of each new interpreter toward developing professional competence and independence.

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