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NOT-SO-DELIBERATE, DELIBERATE PRACTICE

A Contextual Framework for a Part-Time Interpreter

By

ShaCarol Stewart

An action research project submitted to

Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

©December 2022



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

Action Research Project Title:

NOT-SO-DELIBERATE, DELIBERATE PRACTICE:

A Contextual Framework for a Part-Time Interpreter

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Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial
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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
LIST OF FIGURES	6
LIST OF TABLES	7
ABSTRACT	8
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	9
Background	9
Statement of the Problem	9
Purpose of the Study	10
Theoretical Framework	11
Limitations of the Study	12
Definitions of Terms	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Deliberate Practice	14
The Inner Expert	15
Creativity	18
Deliberate Play	20
The Need for Empirical Research	23
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	26
Design	26
Participants	29
Analysis	30
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION	31
Deliberate Practice Plan A	31
Deliberate Practice Plans B and C	34
Who: Who am I?	37
Why: Why do I practice?	39
How: How do I practice?	40
What: What am I doing that constitutes deliberate practice?	42
When: When do I practice?	44
Where: Where do I practice?	46

Implications of the Contextual Framework on Deliberate Practice	49
A Note on Deliberate Practice and Deliberate Play	53
Implications of The Inner Expert and The Part-Time Interpreter (PTI)'s Practice	54
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	56
What is deliberate practice, really?	56
The Part Time Interpreter	58
Practice in Context	58
Summary	60
References	62
APPENDIX A	68

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. TIME SPENT IN DELIBERATE PRACTICE IN MINUTES	28
FIGURE 2. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN DELIBERATE PRACTICE	29
FIGURE 3. TIME SPENT IN EACH CATEGORY	30
FIGURE 4. HIERARCHY OF CONTEXTUAL PRACTICE	33
FIGURE 5. WHO?	35
FIGURE 6. WHAT?	39
FIGURE 7. WHEN?	41
FIGURE 8. WHERE?	44
FIGURE 9. PRACTICE LOG	47
FIGURE 10. THE GOLDEN CIRCLE	48

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. DELIBERATE PRACTICE PLAN A	23
TABLE 2. SELF CREATED PRACTICE PLAN DESCRIPTIONS	32

ABSTRACT

NOT-SO-DELIBERATE, DELIBERATE PRACTICE

A Contextual Framework for a Part-Time Interpreter

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As a part-time interpreter without abundant opportunities for skill development, deliberate practice is essential, yet can be difficult to attain. Several key themes are revealed in this research of a part-time interpreter's deliberate practice while considering the role of the *inner expert* (Reeves, 2014). Using this perspective, deliberate practice is approached by considering the contextual factors surrounding an individual's engagement in a practice profession. Personal factors influencing a practitioner's feasibility in engaging in deliberate practice are considered. Findings show the need to be flexible when implementing deliberate practice and to follow one's own context prior to applying prescribed definitions of deliberate practice in isolation.

Keywords: practice, plan, deliberate practice, deliberate play, interpreter, inner expert

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

As an interpreter who did not graduate from an interpreter training program and who is not a full-time interpreter, personal experience has shown me that there is a need in the field of interpreting for methods to support skill development and practice opportunities for interpreters who enter the field through alternate pathways. I work as an interpreter on a part-time basis while maintaining a full-time job in the education field. As my interpreting skills mature, I welcome the possibility of transitioning into more frequent interpreting positions and opportunities. I have been innovative and resourceful when it comes to developing my skills. However, due to personal life choices, multiple jobs, and finances, I am unable to invest the same level of time and energy to skill development and practice as the average, full-time interpreter. This research explores what I have done and will continue to do when interpreting and learning opportunities are limited, unavailable, or inaccessible. This research reveals that as a part-time interpreter, I often have limited time and resources; therefore, I must be innovative in the way I implement my professional practice. Life events and personal factors often put me in a position of inadequate or insufficient practice opportunities. How can I engage in practice without sufficient time or ability? What does practice look like for the part-time interpreter?

Statement of the Problem

Interpreters commonly acquire skill development through training programs and deliberate practice. Deliberate practice is intentional, targeted practice on a skill on a routine basis (Ericsson et al., 1993). As I have witnessed in respective professional communities, deliberate practice is regularly referred to as a standard for interpreter practitioners.

Unfortunately, the application of deliberate practice comes with a series of challenges that are seldom discussed or explored in existing research. Based on my firsthand experience, the type of intentional practice Ericsson et al. (1993) describe is not often afforded to interpreters who lack time, resources, and consistent motivation compounded by the management of numerous responsibilities. I posit that what these interpreters need is a plan or a guide to develop skills within practice. How often can or should we practice? When should we be practicing? Where should we be practicing? How do we apply certain methods into practicing our profession? We often can state our *why* and our *what*. Why are we practicing? We want to be skilled interpreters, stakeholders in our field, and fluent, cultural mediators. What are we practicing? Visualization, voicing, transliterating, consecutive interpreting, depicted action, pausing and pacing, and more. Now, I challenge us to think about how we are answering the remaining questions. What components are needed in self-developed practice plans to adequately engage in professional practice? What are the attributes of these practice plan components? How will interpreting performance be impacted by self-developed practice plans? Are self-developed practiced plans successful? Are other parameters defining practice necessary? Furthermore, do these plans and parameters align with definitions of deliberate practice as stated within existing literature? Through my research, I aim to answer many of these questions and more, especially keeping in mind my status as a part-time interpreter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research project is to explore the various practice plans and strategies that I must implement to become successful in possessing the acquired skills to perform American Sign Language (ASL) to English and English to ASL interpreting. I explore activities, strategies, and professional development needed to maintain and advance technical

ASL/English interpreting skills. Based on experience, research, and personal preference, I engage in self-developed practice plans that incorporate *deliberate practice* (Ericsson et al., 1993), *deliberate play* (Côté et al., 2007), use of one's *inner expert* (Reeves, 2014) in non-traditional practice (Tiselius, 2012), and self-care. I determine the effectiveness of practice plans modeled after a body of research highlighting key methods to approach practice. I hypothesize that deliberate practice may include our inner expert and deliberate play (or exploratory practices) as well. This research is unique in that it does not only outline methods of practice and describe strategies, but it follows my practice implementation, with consideration that factors may impact my design because of my engagement with interpreting practice and work on an irregular basis.

Theoretical Framework

The empirical research will be informed using a grounded theoretical framework (Brown, 2012) since themes will be explored in a recursive manner as practice is implemented. However, as data is analyzed and methods are re-implemented, a transformational, grounded theory (Redman-MacLaren & Mills, 2015) emerges. The structure of the study provides the suggestion that a shift is needed in the way a part-time interpreter perceives and engages in professional practice. I begin using one methodology and shift my focus to subsequent versions as outcomes are revealed. Throughout, a grounded theoretical framework is applied to discover novel themes revealing themselves through recurring practice.

This research will inform practices needed and used in my skill development. It will provide novel strategies to engage in interpreter preparation and alternatives that are typically inaccessible due to lack of participation in a traditional education program or language

development cohort. My research will provide a recommended process for improving one's interpreting skills with consideration of limited time, resources, and availability. Findings will offer guided learning plans to interpreters who are unable to take advantage of more traditional methods of practice and skill development. Interpreters would be able to develop their skill sets using an already examined, alternative approach. Ward et al. (2007) find that individuals who have accumulated the largest number of practice hours throughout their career and consistently and deliberately engaged in high levels of practice for sustainable periods are more likely to attain expertise. Therefore, it is inferred that the theory of deliberate practice includes approaches geared toward interpreters who are assumed to have ample time, resources, and availability. In this research, I seek to understand how part-time interpreters can achieve their professional objectives with more confidence and in a manner that meets their personal needs.

Limitations of the Study

Using my own reasoning and developing my own practice plan creates partialities as I may have interpreted the elements of my practice plan differently from another individual attempting to replicate this research. For this reason, I offer a list of both researched and self-created definitions to assist the reader in understanding the approach and lens with which I view and use the following terms related to practice.

Definitions of Terms

The following are simplified, self-developed definitions based upon the prevailing literature and commentary used in my respective professional circles regarding *deliberate practice* (Ericsson et al., 1993), *deliberate play* (Côté et al., 2007), and *the inner expert* (Reeves, 2014).

Deliberate-Intentional, directed effort

Practice-An activity or engagement that targets a skill to later be applied to its designated setting or goal, occurring without any imposed restrictions (i.e., loose set of parameters to determine the intended practice)

Deliberate Practice-Intentional activity that targets a skill often occurring repetitiously to later be applied to an end goal or performance, often occurring with imposed restrictions (i.e., strict set of parameters to determine the intended practice; combination of intentional effort, resources, motivation (Ericsson et al., 1993)

Deliberate Play -Intentional activity that targets a skill often incorporating games, fun, pleasure, or a casual dynamic to the practice experience

Inner Expert-an individual's personal knowledge about themselves; introspection, intuition; personal, reflective knowledge used to guide an individual to perform or approach a task

Part-Time Interpreter (PTI)-an interpreter working less than 40 hours per week, an interpreter working on an irregular basis, and/or an interpreter who does not earn primary income from the work of interpreting

Terms are often italicized to emphasize the intent of its meaning as it is described above. The inner expert is not measured in any way throughout the scope of this research. However, it is used throughout the study. Scholars may find they hold their own personal perceptions of what all terms represent and thus, readers are cautioned to review the study with respect to this researcher's lens or with caution if they opt to use their own lens (or inner expert). Deliberate play and deliberate practice are concepts that continuously evolve throughout the course of the study and will be revisited often throughout the research and expanded upon in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is explored that considers the multi-faceted nature of deliberate practice. Deliberate practice overlaps areas such as deliberate play and research explains the meaning of deliberate practice while paralleling this activity to other efforts employed to achieve expert performance.

Deliberate Practice

Deliberate practice is defined as: “a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic. While regular practice might include mindless repetitions, deliberate practice requires focused attention and is conducted with the specific goal of improving performance” (Clear, n.d., para. 1). Ericsson et al. (1993) describe the act of deliberate practice involving the need for continuous, routine practice of skills. “Deliberate practice includes activities that have been specially designed to improve the current level of performance” (Ericsson et al., 1993, p. 368). This theory of practice has historically been used to inform scholars about the acquisition of expert performance in athletes and musicians. I now aim to extend this theory to the field of interpreting from a slightly different vantagepoint of a part-time interpreter.

In relation to interpreting, ASL-English technical skill development is explored in Schafer’s (2011) research entitled *Developing Expertise through a Deliberate Practice Project*. The research follows a group of students in an ASL program as they engage in various methods of deliberate practice. Schafer quantifies student self-assessments of their perception of skill improvement. The students engage in a variety of deliberate practice activities such as practicing receptive fingerspelling using drills and then later in the context of a narrative text. Schafer gives further credibility to Ericsson’s research on deliberate practice in her own investigation.

Schafer's methods integrate with my intention to implement deliberate practice to improve my own skills and offer a comparison of what deliberate practice looks like and how it may impact interpreter skill development.

As cited in Shreve (2006):

Deliberate practice can be more narrowly defined as regular engagement in specific activities directed at performance enhancement in a particular domain, where domain is some sort of skilled activity. According to the results of expertise studies, deliberate practice only occurs under the following conditions, when (a) there is a well-defined task, (b) the task is of appropriate difficulty for the individual, (c) there is informative feedback, and (d) there are opportunities for repetition and the correction of errors (Ericsson 1996: 21). Further, there is an expectation that the practice occurs over a significant period of time. For instance, Ericsson and Crutcher (1990), among others, have argued that expertise requires at least ten years of deliberate practice to emerge (p. 29).

Deliberate practice, in its earliest discoveries, appears to be a strict process to develop skills to an expert level. The remaining research will explore how the definition of deliberate practice has broadened over time with respect to other prevalent theories and continuously updated research.

The Inner Expert

Schafer (2011) touches on a byproduct of deliberate practice: *the internal expert* or *the inner expert*, as coined by Reeves (2014) in *Creativity as a learned skill: The role of deliberate practice in the development of creativity*. There is little research on the concept of the inner

expert in relation to deliberate practice. Petruzzelli (2016) offers one definition of the inner expert:

...the aspect of ourselves that is *absolutely* clear on what we feel, think, want, need, value and sense in each and every moment. It's our personal truth in each moment. Our inner expert validates our current moment experience. The wisdom of our inner expert can be likened to our intuition or gut feeling. (para. 2)

Reeves (2014) discusses the phenomenon of an inner expert that participants use to engage in deliberate practice (p. 89-92, 96). Reeves stresses the benefit of the inner expert in each individual's practice and the need for further research to be conducted on this topic. The presence of the inner expert occurs as individuals set goals, design activities, and perform self-analysis of work on themselves as opposed to receiving external feedback from teachers, mentors, and others. Other researchers have stumbled upon this phenomenon as well. Since interpreters may lack environments where they can get feedback, they develop what Shreve described as "a high level of self-directed 'metacognitive activity' related to performance assessment [...] including self-regulation, namely, the ability to attend to, monitor, and reflect on the nature of the text and the task" (Shreve, 2006, p. 32.).

Whenever I self-assess my work and skills, I use my inner expert as discussed by Reeves (2014) and engage in metacognitive activity tasks as described by Shreve (2006). In the academic domain, Plant et al. (2005) found that 'solo study' represented the highest-quality deliberate practice among college students. Plant et al. (2005; as cited in Baker et al., 2014) discovered musicians determined the highest quality of deliberate practice to be independent studies. Furthermore, quantity of practice alone was not a significant predictor or academic

performance (Baker et al., 2014). This practice of solo study that is prevalent in sports and arts also has a place in the field of interpreting when interpreters engage in practice. I conclude that the development of the inner expert often takes shape in these solo spaces and research is needed to understand what happens because of this process. Reeves (2014) prompts me to explore how my own inner expert informs my deliberate practice and to fill the gap of the influence of the inner expert on deliberate practice.

Napier and Baker (2004) determine the necessity for interpreters to use metalinguistic awareness in their interpreting process. Pollitt (2000) describes the need for interpreters to obtain critical linguistic and cultural awareness. These two features are essential tools for an interpreter's "kit bag" (i.e., resources at one's disposal that one continuously utilizes). Pollitt reveals that metalinguistic awareness is one of those tools. This supports Reeves (2014) and Schafer's (2011) inclusion of a role of the inner expert within the deliberate practice arena. As Napier and Baker (2004) suggest, I would need to explore and develop my skills using deliberate practice while activating my metalinguistic awareness of my interpreting products. This self-explored knowledge will be necessary in my "kit bag."

Watching television, listening to shows, and reading can help (Ghonsooly & Shirvan, 2011) improve an interpreter's skills when used in conjunction with Dornyei & Otto (1998)'s model of motivation. This model includes task execution (e.g., listening to a show and interpreting), appraisal (e.g., evaluating and comparing self to example interpreter), and action control (e.g., setting a model, improve skills, imagine self as example interpreter) (Ghonsooly & Shirvan, 2011) This implies that unexpected strategies are a form of deliberate practice. Watching or listening to shows are activities not typically integrated into the traditional deliberate practice of an interpreter and often seen as passive rather than deliberate. This

suggests that highly motivated individuals can influence their attained level of performance to a much greater degree than traditionally assumed. Ghonsooly and Shirvan extend their research by identifying a gap in existing literature on the correlation between highly motivated interpreters and their level of performance as a result of deliberate practice containing unexpected strategies. If research were to fill this gap, would passive or unexpected strategies informed by one's own inner expert grow in approval as a part of the deliberate practice arena?

Creativity

In How Do Creative Experts Practice New Skills? Exploratory Practice in Breakdancers, Shimizu and Okada (2018) conduct research on dance performers and their creativity using evidence-based methods in support of deliberate practice. The study supports Ericsson's research which seeks to find if deliberate practice is still attributed to expert performance across domains (e.g., arts, music), including those involving creativity and novel products (e.g., a performance, artwork). Their research describes the benefits of a highly "exploratory and creative process" to practice skills and become experts who create new patterns by themselves (Shimizu and Okada, 2018). Shimizu and Okada (2018) provide further support of the use of deliberate practice and tie it into the realm of creativity. I interpret this "exploratory and creative process" as a form of skill-specific play or deliberate play (Côté et. al, 2007), which I propose is a subset of deliberate practice.

Runco (2004) outlines the benefits of creativity in a variety of domains including health, self-expression, and problem-solving. Creativity can be impeded by fixedness and the best way to remedy this is flexibility. This research further supports my quest to justify the need and benefit for creative practices (e.g., deliberate play and exploratory practices) within deliberate

practice in my own skill development. There is abundant research on why deliberate practice is used, but creativity lends itself to help us understand why deliberate play and exploratory practices are also necessary to inform skill development.

Tiselius (2012) finds in a research study that interpreters were practicing both main and sub-skills of interpreting without labeling it as practice. Participants attested to not practicing in the traditional sense (e.g., recording themselves and performing specific exercises), but noted less structured practice activities (e.g., collecting expressions and words and reading critically). I aim to explore my own skill development through creative, exploratory means such as deliberate play and activating my inner expert while acknowledging the need for a more holistic view of deliberate practice.

Revisiting the idea of the inner expert, the solo practice described by Plant et al. (2005) was further questioned by Baker et al. (2014) to understand if practice needed to inherently be *deliberate*. Other forms of practice associated with deliberate practice are offered such as those described by Baker et al. (2014): *unstructured training and play, performance, and training*. To extend Ericsson's previous research, Ericsson & Harwell (2019) also offer comprehensive definitions: *purposeful practice, structure practice, and naïve practice*. It is a challenge to discuss practice when it has several commonly used meanings (Herring et al., 2022). Herring et al. (2022) credits a group of authors (Motta, 2011; Schafer, 2011; Tiselius, 2018) for yet another term: *skill development-focused practice* or *SDPF*. The laundry list of terms and definitions used to define practice is a nod to how our field has become creative with the way we define (or not define) deliberate practice in existing literature.

Deliberate Play

Ericsson et al. (1993)'s research was challenged by many individuals seeking to understand how skills are developed. Hambrick et al. (2014) offer a contrasting viewpoint to Ericsson et al.'s (1993) research by asserting that practice alone does not make an expert. Campetti & Gobet (2011) concluded that deliberate practice is necessary but not sufficient to account for individual differences in performance. Ford et al. (2009) indicate the research conceived by Ericsson et al. (1993), as applied to soccer athletes. Further support and merit are offered to the concept of deliberate practice as a beneficial endeavor to develop skills. However, to support Hambrick et al. (2014), Ford et al. (2009) propose the need for both skill/domain-specific deliberate practice and skill-specific play (e.g., more motivating activities). These researchers (Campetti & Gobet, 2011, Ford et al., 2009, and Hambrick et al., 2014) are only a few mentioned who provide opposition to Ericsson's initial findings. Similarly, I posit that skill-specific play is a subset of deliberate practice which is overlooked and missing from much research.

Pesce et al. (2016) discuss the benefits of deliberate play in children and how it improves motor skills. This text offers research to support the use of deliberate play through the example of enriched physical education and I believe that this parallels the need for deliberate play in interpreting skill development. Côté, Baker, and Abernathy (2008) document evidence from team sports suggesting that both deliberate practice and deliberate play may contribute significantly to the development of sport expertise. In their earlier body of research, these three researchers describe deliberate play as the following: fun, a process of experimentation, providing immediate gratification, loosely monitored, and no focus on immediate correction (Côté et. al, 2003). The definition of deliberate play is also later added to by the same researchers

as being enjoyable, flexible, and occurring in various settings (Côté et. al, 2007). This research provides a contrast to that of Ericsson's focus on deliberate practice and amplifies the gap regarding the role of deliberate play, specifically in interpreting skill development.

Keyes (2017) asserts the need for deliberate play in the adult sport of shooting. He uses personal experience and observation to note that in adulthood, burnout is much more likely and external factors impact adult ability to become experts in their chosen field. In explaining this in the sport of shooting he writes:

The problem is the work is much harder than experienced before, and the chance of burnout is much higher as a result. This is where the concept of deliberate play comes in. If you want to reach the highest levels of the game, you have to find a way to eliminate the errors and mistakes. One lost target makes a huge difference when shooting against other master level shooters. In order to attain complete concentration and focus, you have to practice for it and become more creative in training and dealing with match stress. In the process, you have to avoid becoming both burnt out and stuck in a rut.

One of the best ways to do this is just to shoot that round of skeet for fun or shoot another game or just shoot. At the levels I'm talking about, you are still exercising your automatic skills, but you also are allowing your brain to relax and become more creative. By shooting for fun and relaxation, you let your brain indulge in what is called *hippocampal replay*, a function that occurs in sleep and while relaxing. When *hippocampal replay* is in place, problems get solved ("just sleep on it" is another way to put it). And if you are shooting, the focus is more on being creative and improving.

Deliberate fun sounds odd, but it is a real thing. If you have aspirations to improve or just get out of a shooting rut, remember all work is not the best thing even though you do have to do the work. (Keyes, 2017, para. 21-23)

Keyes (2017) articulates both the cognitive and biological benefits deliberate play can have on performance when we take a step back from more traditional forms of deliberate practice that could lead to burnout.

Robinson et al. (2021) and Drinko (2020) discuss the advantages of deliberate play in adulthood as well as noting improvements in brain function, creativity, and productivity. They discuss the benefits of simply having fun and enjoying the moment. This emphasis is similar to my own experiences with deliberate practice where mentors have expressed the need to “loosen up” and “play with it,” specifically while practicing interpreting skills such as visualization. Deliberate practice is a heavily discussed skill development method in the interpreting field. However, deliberate play is an area that is seldom discussed and likely is imbued in deliberate practice more than we realize.

Skill development is married to the concept of deliberate practice, which, according to Ford et al. (2009), includes opportunities for motivating activities in the form of skill-specific play. This perspective parallels my intended method of using both orthodox (e.g., domain-specific deliberate practice) and unorthodox methods (e.g., domain specific play, exploratory practices). Examples of deliberate practice may include engaging with workbooks and textbooks and consulting with mentors on targeted skills while skill-specific play may include games (Vollmer, 2021), leisurely reading or viewing, and spending time within casual, social environments using the source and target languages. This research prompts me to explore if

deliberate practice is only fueled by effort, resources, and motivation (Ericsson et al., 1993). Can deliberate practice be fun and engaging without the connotation of it being unenjoyable and still aid professional growth? Hambrick et al. (2013) also observe the comments of Gardner (1995) who commented that the deliberate practice view “requires a blindness to ordinary experience” (p. 802). As cited in Baker & Young (2014):

Gardner (1995) proposed that understanding the acquisition of expertise requires resolving ‘who starts and why, who continues and why, and in what ways do those who continue successfully differ from all others’ (p. 803). To date, there has been considerable research devoted to the latter question, almost to the exclusion of the former questions, at least in studies using the DPF (Deliberate Practice Framework). Comparatively, there has been little research to understand the conditions that allow individuals to circumvent motivational and effort constraints in the DPF. (p. 150)

Ericsson et al. (1993)’s findings may not have explored the idea that deliberate practice is not entirely effort, resources, and motivation, but also a result of our individual, authentic experiences and how they impact us.

The Need for Empirical Research

In *Expertise without deliberate practice? The case of simultaneous interpreters*, Tiselius (2013) discusses research conducted on three interpreters and their approach to practice. All three interpreters mentioned different types of practice, although they did not specifically state that they practiced a targeted skill. Without being taught to do so, and without regarding it as practice, they talked about different types of activities performed regularly under practice-like conditions, such as one interpreter’s newspaper reading and another’s radio listening. They did

not appear to consciously or unconsciously practice in a way that could be described as deliberate in terms of Ericsson et al.'s (1993) definition. When they discussed their practice, they did not state they practiced specific skills, but described more unintentional activities such as reading and listening to stimuli. However, the practice-like conditions leave me to presume there is more research to be done if these practice-like conditions parallel deliberate practice, deliberate play, or creative, exploratory practice approaches.

The results show that although the interpreters had not been taught deliberate practice, they did utilize deliberate practice strategies to improve their sub-skills. However, whether this can be defined as deliberate practice as it has been defined by Ericsson et al. (2007) is open to discussion, especially since none of the participants participated in activities in order to improve targeted skills. Thus, Tiselius (2013) concludes:

Findings in this study indicate that experienced interpreters do not engage in deliberate practice the same way as other professions. If this is the case, the theoretical framework will need to be adapted both in terms of how an expert is identified and also in terms of how the expertise concept of deliberate practice can be applied to interpreting research. (Tiselius, 2013, p. 204)

In *On the Empirical Substantiation of the Definition of "Deliberate Practice"* (Ericsson et al., 1993) and *"Deliberate Play"* (Côté et al., 2007) in *Youth Athletes*, findings suggested that the definitions of deliberate practice and deliberate play should be empirically substantiated (Güllich et al., 2020). One of the issues of both definitions (Côté et al., 2007; Ericsson et al., 1993) is that the authors ascribed some of the central components of their definitions but did not empirically measure the ascribed attributes. I will provide a general framework for deliberate play and

practice in interpreting skill development by using my own empirical evidence to create newly formed concepts of practice and play.

Empirical research is sorely needed to fill in these gaps of the intersection of deliberate practice, deliberate play and creative, exploratory practices, and the role of the inner expert. Tiselius (2018) speculates that “there is expertise in interpreting without deliberate practice, with a different kind of practice, or maybe that there is too little deliberate lifelong practice in the interpreting profession” (p.13). As you will see in Chapter 4, I find her assertions to be correct. Still, I find a greater need in literature considering her phrasing of “a different kind of practice.” What does this different kind of practice look like? The research reviewed here has explored deliberate practice, deliberate play, creativity and exploratory practices, and the role of the inner expert. However, the intersectionality of these practice methods has yet to be given its place in the existing literature today with respect to the interpreting profession.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Design

I used a grounded, empirical method of data collection combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in evolving stages. Methodology was divided into two goals: 1) developing an effective self-prescribed practice plan and 2) analyzing the components and context of the self-prescribed practice plan.

I approached my first goal in stages. In my first stage, the foundation of which I built my subsequent theories, I created a deliberate practice plan (A) (Table 1) to follow for a period of one week. Ericsson et al. (1993) and Ward et al. (2007) prompted me to consider the need for specific deliberate practice strategies to contribute to my personal ASL-English technical skill development in the form of a self-developed practice plan. As the week continued and at the culmination of the week, I continuously used qualitative data in the form of observations and running records of my personal attitudes and reflections on the benefit of the practice and insights to justify adjusting the initial plan as necessary.

Table 1

Deliberate Practice Plan A

Deliberate Practice Plan	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Weekends
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Self-Care	5 minutes of stretching	5 minutes of stretching/cool lighting	5 minutes of stretching/cool lighting/aromatherapy	10 minutes of stretching/cool lighting/aromatherapy/music
Deliberate Play	20 minutes of game-based, recreational activity	20 minutes of game-based, recreational activity	30 minutes of game-based, recreational activity	30 minutes of game-based, recreational activity
Skill Development	30 minutes of intentional practice	40 minutes of intentional practice	50 minutes of intentional practice	65 minutes of intentional practice
Self-Care	5 minutes of meditation	10 minutes of meditation and coloring	10 minutes of meditation and coloring	15 minutes of meditation, coloring, and music
Duration	60 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes	120 minutes

In my second stage, I analyzed the data from my trial period of the initial week and adjusted the practice plan accordingly based on the themes revealed (e.g., success in implementation, length of implementation, descriptions of practice time and location, quality post work samples, running records of observations during practice, activities addressed in practice, etc.). This resulted in an updated, more informed, and researched practice plan (B).

In my third stage, I began the same reciprocal process of implementing the practice plan (B) and analyzing the data based on a variety of themes to further develop a concise, more

intentional, and researched plan of practice for myself resulting in plan C, which will be discussed in the results and analysis section due to their unique composition and the data informing their development. The iterations of data informed practice plans ceased with practice plan C. Because the data progression no longer yielded the necessity of a new, formalized self-development plan, focus turned toward analyzing the components and context of the self-prescribed practice plan C method.

In summary, the first goal of my research study compared to that of a revolution around a clock. I began at “12” and worked my way around to see why it practice happens, how it happens, what happens, when it happens, and where it happens. After I made a full revolution, I interpreted my findings and bag at “1” with more insight, information, and clarity to make another revolution. Shreve (2006) describes the metacognitive activity interpreters need to perform self-assessment. However, it appeared that before I could allot my metacognitive energy toward self-assessment of the skill targeted in practice, I first needed to apply metacognitive energy to my self-assessment with the practice itself.

After my data and self-assessment using reflection led me to my final practice plan (C), I began the second initiative of my research study: analyzing the components of my self-developed practice plan. As a result of my self-prescribed practice plan, I compiled a list of 132 practice plan field experience activities conducted over the span of two months, April 1st to May 31st, 2022. As I compiled this list, I added anecdotal records of the following: activity name, date, time, duration, type of activity, topic, what I learned, what I noticed, how I benefited, context or environment, the source of the activity, resources needed, and other relevant notes. As these subjects were noted, data was categorized according to thematic groups as concepts

emerged. Quantitative data was gathered from the list of activities to determine frequency of discovered thematic occurrences.

This method of data collection is heavily embedded in grounded theory as ideals that emerged were a result of constant revisiting of the raw data as salient points were deduced. This method is rather subjective in nature being it was my (the researcher and participant) opinion and synthesis driving the creating and selection of thematic groups. The method involves a great deal of input from one's inner expert.

I focused on my own skill development and my exploration of practices needed to improve my interpreter performance. Some of my decisions and actions were influenced by other individuals, but the data collected and analyzed are my own. Future replications of this study will need to consider the need to include other human subjects and set appropriate parameters to account for their inclusion.

Participants

I am the single participant for this self-study action research. Thus, I used an idiographic sampling (De Carlo et al., 2021) of my own revelations, as opposed to others or a group, when engaging in practice. I obtained a holistic, yet detailed view (De Carlo et al., 2021) of what tools and techniques I use in interpreting practice while revealing, substantiating, or debunking new and previous claims. My initial theories question the concept of deliberate practice as it applies to part-time interpreters. My own ongoing qualitative data collected and examined are used to discover my own themes and then connected to research to corroborate and expand existing literature.

Analysis

Grounded theory analysis is most supportive of my research and directly correlates to my research design. I identify key findings periodically throughout my data collection. I collect information on a variety of factors such as length of time practiced, activities employed, catalysts for commencing and maintaining practice time, location of practice, and prescribed schedules and their level of effectiveness. Within the respective categorizations, further themes were identified to describe the practice activity. Using professional judgment, informed reasoning, and personal and research-based definitions of practice, data was quantified and investigated to describe my personal interactions with professional practice. Considering the ranging components of my research, I reflect on the approaches in each of my repetitions that were most supportive to my efforts in engaging in practice and those that were not. For example, quantitative data in the form of numerical ratings of 1-5 for pre- and post- work samples were initially used in my first stages of research design implementation to determine effectiveness of practice, but quickly discontinued due to qualitative data emerging as the primary need for research goals. Therefore, I use inductive reasoning and constant comparison (De Carlo et al., 2021) to synthesize my data and cycle back and forth throughout my data, ideas, and theoretical understandings. This recursive process is key to uncovering the researched themes and strategies that will best inform my interpreting practice.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

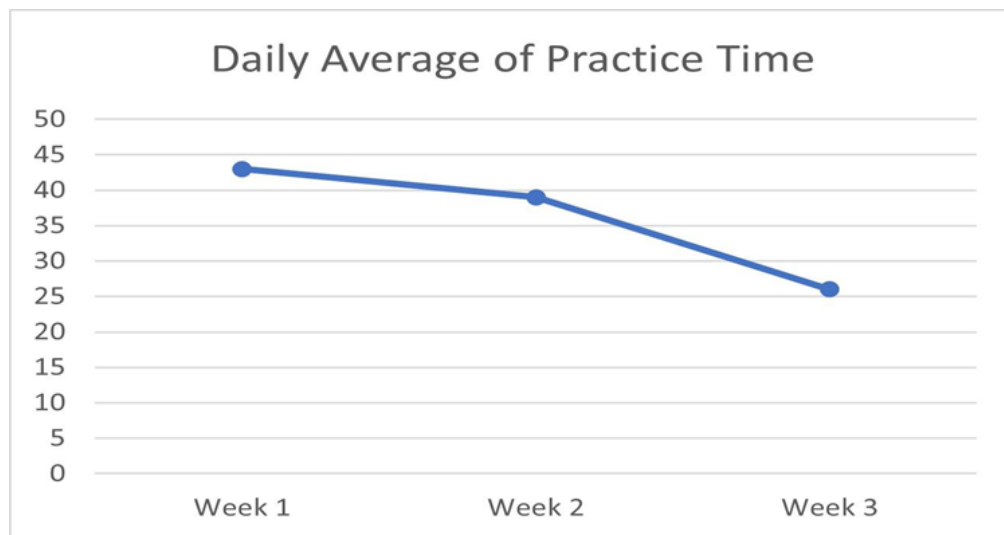
Deliberate Practice Plan A

When I began this action research, my intent was to determine what type of practice plan would serve my skill development best. I began with an example plan which I modified after a period of one week.

My inconsistency in carrying out this proposed plan (Table 1) was quickly observed to be unsuccessful. The lofty goal I had set of implementing a practice plan including a variety of components (deliberate practice, self-care, and deliberate play) for at least one hour in increasing increments was uncondusive to my personal roles and responsibilities. As seen in the graphs below, the time (in minutes) spent meeting the practice plan expectations dropped significantly after one week.

Figure 1

Time Spent in Deliberate Practice in Minutes



In my practice plan A, I initially intended to practice 60 minutes daily. As exhibited in Figure 1, the average practice time for week one neared 45 minutes and significantly dropped to nearly 30 minutes by the end of the three weeks indicating that there were days that I did not implement my plan. Reasons for not engaging in practice varied, but the most notable themes were time and motivation. This significant decrease in practice time can further be researched by adapting this plan and breaking up practice time into increments.

A summary of the most common activities in each domain outlines methods used for each is displayed in Figure 2. It is also worth mentioning how much time was given to each of these domains in Figure 3.

Figure 2

Summary of Activities within Deliberate Practice Plan A

Self-Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hand/wrist stretches -Meditations -Eye stretches/exercises -Thematic meditations (patience, fatigue, self-confidence, etc.) -Coaching/mentoring sessions
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Playing trivia games to increase background knowledge of interpreting related content -Browsing, researching websites for information -Signing recreationally when engaged in other activities (e.g., interpreting a video game, a TV show someone is watching, etc).
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recording “cold” and “warm” work samples -Sending work samples for peer review and studying peer review notes -Practice workbooks such as Carol Patrie’s series -Practicing specific skills through creative means (e.g., drawing) -Webinars, workshops, professional development -Group mentoring and practice -Organizational led practice groups

Figure 3

Time Spent in Each Category in Minutes

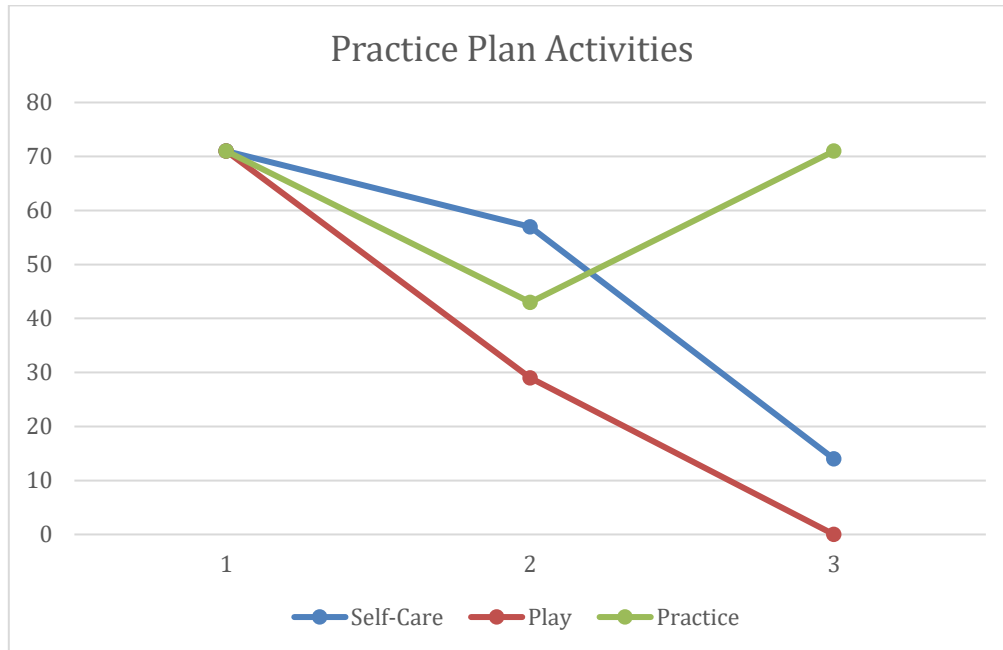


Figure 2 shows that self-care, deliberate play, and deliberate practice (focusing on technical skill development) were my initial criteria of practice. However, anecdotal notes revealed that deliberate play was difficult to create or characterize. Engaging in activities such as sending video messages and playing games were sources of deliberate play. However, I realized I was altering the meaning of deliberate play based on the activities I engaged. Any activity that was flexible was qualified as deliberate play even though it was not always necessarily fun or enjoyable. Figure 3 shows the majority of plan implementation was devoted to deliberate practice while self-care and deliberate play trailed largely behind. Deliberate practice was found to be the most advantageous use of practice time as it typically targeted specific skill areas needing improvement and more activities were available to engage in this area of practice. Despite the decreasing trend for self-care in this plan, anecdotal notes did reveal the benefit of

incorporating self-care and how self-care functioned as a catalyst to initiate, or prompt continued practice opportunities. Literature ought to be consulted regarding self-care as a part of practice and needs to be applied and integrated in future iterations of this study. It was difficult to engage in deliberate play without having easily accessible or well-thought-out activities or resources for this domain. The definition of deliberate play was flexible depending on what activities I executed.

Deliberate Practice Plans B and C

After attempting to implement this deliberate practice plan for three weeks between January 24th and February 13th, 2022, and seeing continued unmet benchmarks, I decided it was necessary to change my approach. I wanted to adopt what I called a 20-20-20 Plan for three weeks between February 14th and March 4th, 2022. In other words, I strove to engage in any form of practice for at least 20 minutes at least 3 times a day. The rationale behind this approach was that devoting short spurts of time was more manageable and achievable than scheduling a large portion of time. The general idea was to take an hour-long practice session and break it up into manageable time increments. The little, concrete raw data that was collected on this self-proposed 20-20-20 Plan revealed itself to be sporadic and difficult to monitor. There were occurrences of events when I would practice over 20 minutes or sometimes not at all. This quickly caused me to understand that this approach was unsuccessful. Additionally, the specifications of the 20-20-20 Plan were most reflective of what I newly coined a Do What You Can Plan.

Table 2

Self-Created Practice Plan Descriptions

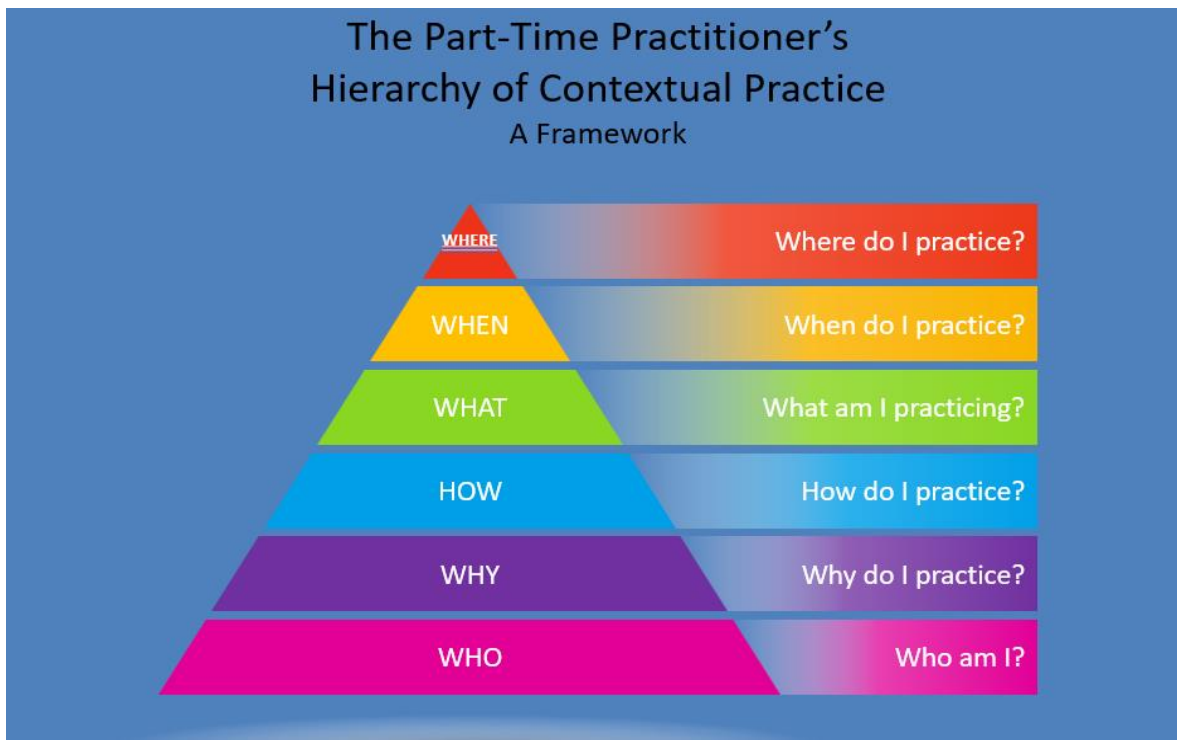
Self-Created Deliberate Practice Plans	A	B	C
Name	The Originator: The Deliberate Practice Plan	The 20-20-20 Plan	The Do What You Can Plan
Description	Specified time frames and general activities of focus (deliberate practice/technical skill development, deliberate play, and self-care)	A fragmented approach to The Originator; separating a long practice session across several brief sessions totaling 1 hour	A running list of all practice-related activities which I engage while noting comprehensive characteristics (why, how, what, when, and where); requisite amount of practice time not required or sought after

The results of what I found were clear. While it was my expectation to engage in practice deliberately, according to Ericsson et al.'s (1993) standards, my self-imposed expectation of hourly practice was unobtainable and therefore, not deliberate. As cited by Tiselius (2018), "Sosniak (2007) warns we should not try to teach what the experts are doing to novices, but rather adapt the knowledge to a level appropriate for the learner" (p. 7). Thus, I had to become creative and utilize my inner expert, to consider the best way I can engage in deliberate practice. I quickly found that I was already engaging in deliberate practice and based on my personal circumstances of juggling duties as a wife, teacher, student, and family member, would need to remove time expectations and appreciate the practice that I was already doing. Thus, my Do What You Can Plan was born and was the most reliable and maintainable approach to collecting data as well. I merely had to write a list of the deliberate practice activities in which I found myself participating while adding notable characteristics such as time, location, and perceived benefits of practice.

This data was collected between April 1st and May 31st, 2022. For the remainder of the analysis of this research, I will be disintegrating the results of my running record of activities. What emerged from my final practice plan was the awareness that deliberate practice is not only a requisite number of hours (Ward et al., 2007), it is also the present appreciation of how a practitioner is already engaging in practice and seeking opportunities to continue skill development while balancing the many facets of personal and professional lifestyles. A critical look is given to the parameters surrounding deliberate practice for the part-time professional in the following discussions.

Figure 4

Hierarchy of Contextual Practice



Throughout data collection, observations, and reflections, it was clear that there was an abundance of information that needed further exploration and research on its own merit. To best

organize the data while accentuating why each needs further exploration, I created a contextual, hierarchical framework (Figure 4) that divides the information into six respective categories with further delineation within each domain. The research collected and analyzed will be further synthesized in the following sections.

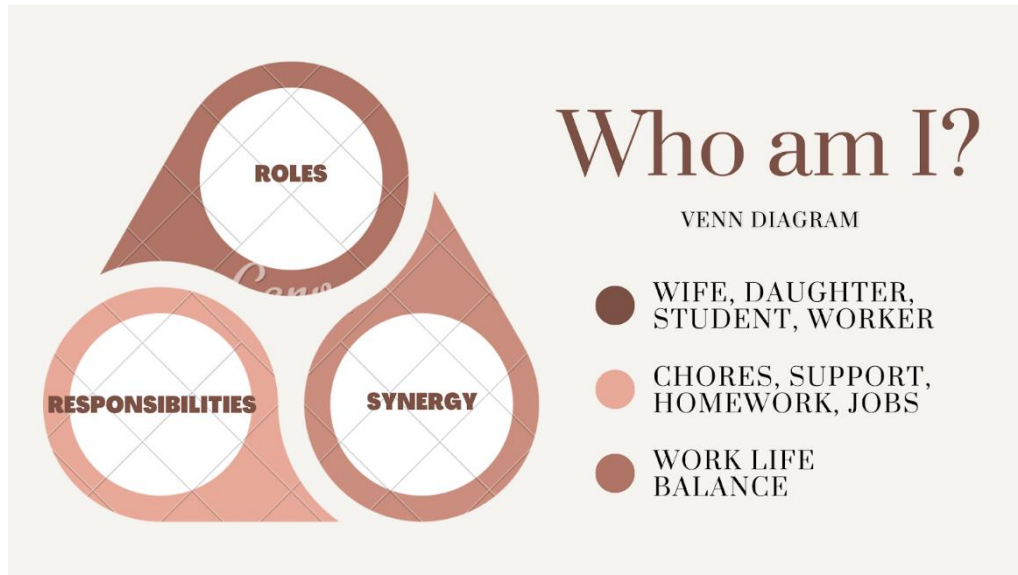
Who: Who am I?

Practice and engagement in the profession is not a one size fits all approach. It looks different depending upon the interpreter and their specific context. For example, I am a part-time interpreter. I maintain a full-time job in the education sector while pursuing interpreting opportunities on a somewhat irregular basis. Through research, data collection, and self-reflection, I have identified three domains that define my identity as it relates to practice in the interpreting profession: *roles*, *responsibilities*, and *synergy*.

The *roles* that influence an individual's ability to practice within a profession are the labels we give ourselves: daughter, wife, sister, and friend are only a few of mine. The *responsibilities* that influence an individual's ability to participate within a profession are the duties and actions we must carry out to fulfill our roles. Finally, *synergy* explains the balance we must maintain among all of our roles and responsibilities. Synergy, in Greek, means "work together" (Latash, 2008). The doctrine of synergy was used by the Greek Fathers of Christianity to imply the collaborative effort of man and God to overcome man's corruption, help man surpass himself, and to reveal God to him (Latash, 2008). While it is a theological example, I offer a present-day example. Today, this may be commonly known as "work life balance." As a part-time interpreter, I juggle my everyday obligations while not becoming overwhelmed and give the best of myself to each of my duties.

Figure 5

Who?



Note: Created using Canva.com

These three areas shape who I, and many others, are in relation to my practice. They are a part of our personal and professional identity that set the groundwork of the remaining questions: *why* I practice, *how* I practice, *what* I practice, *when* I practice, and *where* I practice.

One major facet of my *who* is my role as a part-time interpreter and my responsibilities of performing interpreting jobs on occasional weekends and evenings. I balance the role of part-time interpreter with the role and responsibilities associated with a full-time job and personal obligations and priorities. The remainder of the data synthesis must be viewed from the lens of a working part-time interpreter juggling an assortment of roles and responsibilities while striving to maintain a sense of equilibrium.

Additionally, my *inner expert* is utilized in tandem with the components of *who* I am as an individual and professional. As Petruzzelli (2016) likens, my gut feelings and intuition will play a lead role in how I answer my remaining questions. This perception will be needed to gain clarity on what my deliberate practice looks like when balancing my roles, responsibilities, and achieving synergy.

The remaining questions will be answered in order of importance to this researcher. The hierarchy of questions (Figure 4) is a self-developed line of questioning I used to analyze the primary driving forces in my engagement with practice in the interpreting profession.

Why: Why do I practice?

This is the first step in creating successful practice opportunities. Analyzing field experience logs and anecdotal notes revealed that practice often resulted from three main categories: internal and external motivations, networking and proximity, and fortunate events. A list of examples is included below:

- Motivation:
 - Internal-personal goals, dreams, wishes, passions, and ambitions
 - External-accountability from a colleague or peer, commitments, deadlines, grades
- Networking and proximity
 - Being referred by another interpreter or colleague, socializing and being affiliated with credible interpreter colleagues

- Fortunate events

- Lucky circumstances, being in the right place at the right time (e.g., For me, it looked like haphazardly scrolling through Facebook and landing on a job opportunity).

My *why* began with internal and external rewards and were soon punctuated with the benefits of networking and fortunate circumstances. This area may be further investigated by surveying a pool of interpreters to discover the primary purpose behind engaging in practice. My *why* appears to have been a driving force behind my following inquiries (*how, what, when, and where*). Future researchers could examine the role of purpose in contrast to full-time interpreters.

Furthermore, it must be noted that one of my primary factors for my *why* was external being that I am participating in a graduate studies program. Participation in this program has been a huge motivation for me as I have had the extra accountability for my peers, professors, and the financial commitment I have made to an accredited institution. This revisits the speculations of Ghonsooly and Shirvan (2011) regarding self-motivation and interpreter skill development. Deliberate practice can further be studied by analyzing the influence of individual motivation on subsequent practice efforts. Here, I merely identify and summarize my *why*. However, more study can ensue to include a larger pool of interpreters and describe differences of motivational factors between part-time and full-time interpreters.

How: How do I practice?

This is the second step in the hierarchy of practice sequence. I initially assumed that what I practice would take precedence over how I practice. However, anecdotal notes quickly revealed that how I practiced was the secondary indicator to my practice efforts and fell within the

following three categories: Teacher/Mentor-Led, Shared Leading, and Independently. A list of examples is included below:

- Teacher/Mentor/Peer-Led
 - A class, webinar, or professional development workshop, components of a mentoring or coaching session
- Shared Leading
 - Practice sessions with peers in small groups, turn-taking in a virtual breakout classroom, debriefing and/or case conferencing, on the job assignments
- Independently
 - Recording and reviewing work samples, listening, reading, viewing and reflecting upon media relevant to the profession, on the job assignments

It is necessary to note that one specific practice opportunity can span across all three areas. One example that was reflected was my participation in supervision sessions where I was not the designated supervision leader but perceived my contribution to be reminiscent of shared leadership as I was able to interject commentary to move discussions forward. Thus, this example could be best represented as both peer-led and shared leading. There are a vast number of similar occurrences in my professional practice that I had to delineate how I was engaging in the practice using my professional judgment.

That being said, I am aware this synthesis of how I practice is not precise. However, this is a branch of research that could be further expanded upon with more academic research to

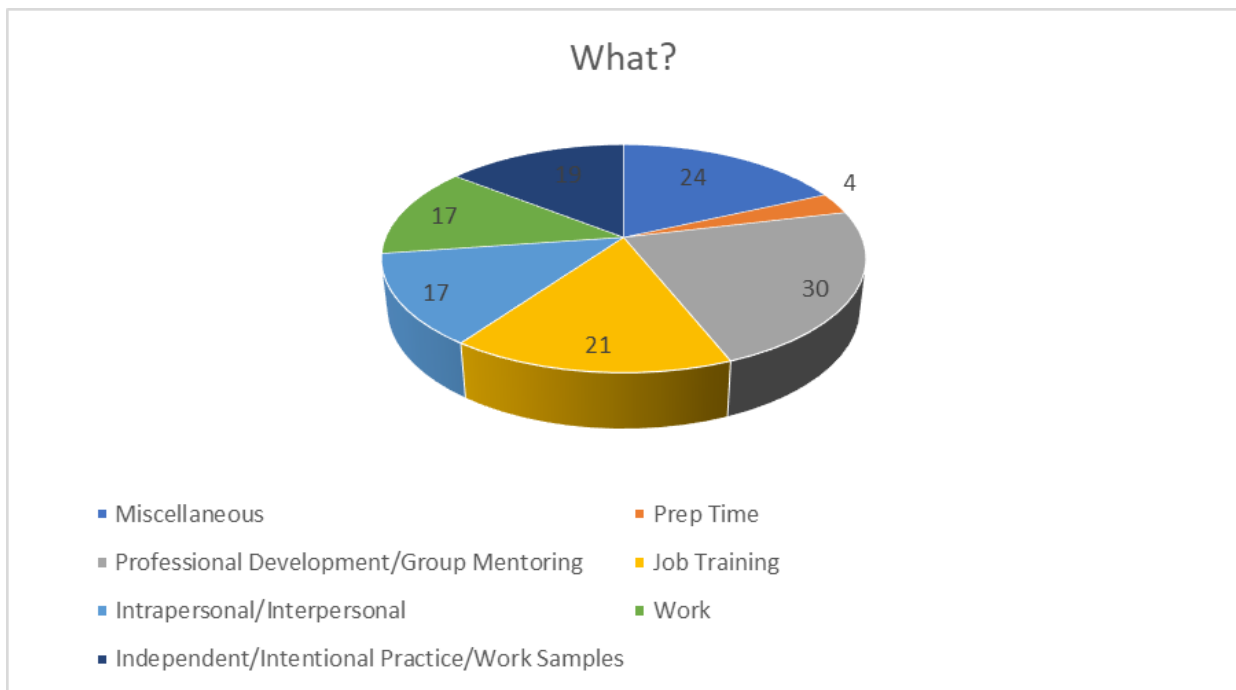
define the definition and role of a leader or non-leader and their influence on how practice is conducted. Additionally, another *how* question could be posed: How does this framework (Figure 4) impact skill development? This was one question unable to be effectively studied due to time limitations; however, future scholars may uncover the answers to this question.

What: What am I doing that constitutes deliberate practice?

This is the third step in the practice sequence. Deliberate practice activities were discovered through my own synthesis of data and categorized in the below seven domains and are listed in order of increasing to decreasing frequency.

Figure 6

What?



- Professional Development: Webinars, workshops, group mentoring

- English to ASL
- Technical/Secondary Skills
- ASL to English
- Miscellaneous: casual, less structured practice sessions including brief conversations or collaborations with peers, sharing of messages using social media platforms in second language, podcasts, brief viewings of YouTube videos, observation of other interpreters, or a combination of more than one category
- Job Training: completion of required training procedures before beginning compensated job duties
- Independent Work Samples: Recording work samples, reviewing work samples, analyzing and performing Think Aloud Protocols (TAP) (Smith, 2014) of work samples
- Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Practice: Supervision, Coaching, Debriefing with colleagues (Dean & Pollard, 2013)
- Compensated Field Experiences: Work experience where compensation is understood either virtual or in person across a variety of platforms
- Preparation: Reviewing scripts, searching for key terms and vocabulary, reviewing provided notes

The results shown above reflect what types of practice I participated in. Numerically, out of 132 logged practice events, professional development made up 30 events, miscellaneous made up 24 events, job training made up 21 events, independent practice/work samples made up 19

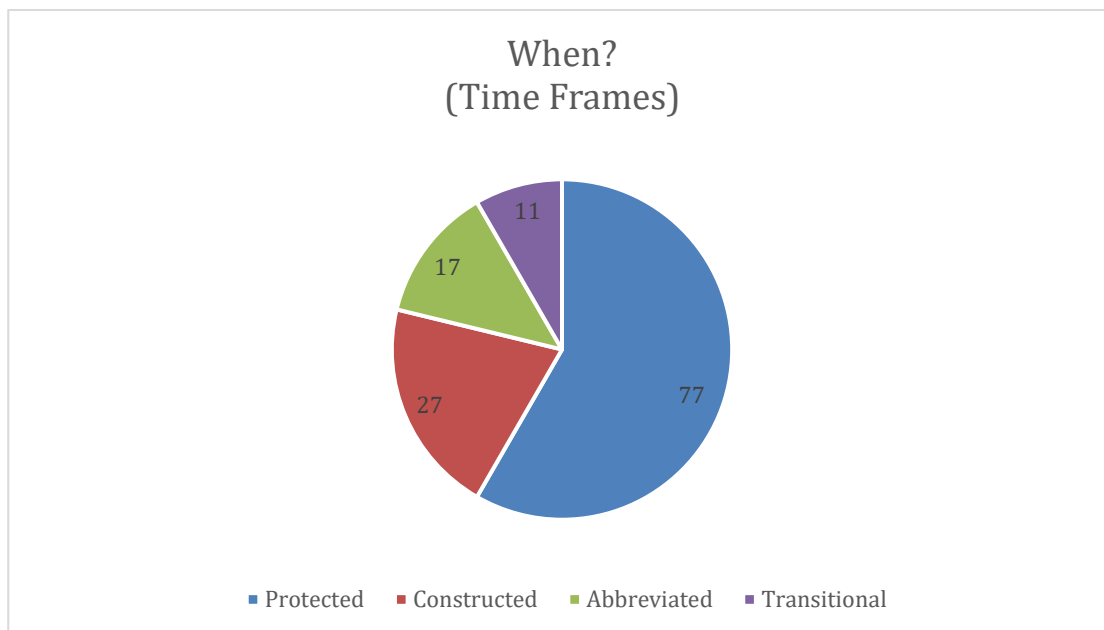
events, and interpersonal and intrapersonal made up 17 events, work made up 17 events, and prep time made up four events. Professional development outweighed all other practice events throughout my deliberate practice. Refer to Appendix A for an extensive list of suggested activities constituting *deliberate practice*, *deliberate play*, or a combination.

When: When do I practice?

This is the fourth step in the practice sequence. Raw data revealed that my opportunities to practice were housed in four domains:

Figure 7

When?



- Protected Time Frames: Pre-designated times of intended practice
 - Ex: Webinar from 6-9pm, Every Thursday evening, set work schedules

- Constructed Time Frames: Periods of time that were largely protected, but not in advance, and newly discovered “in the moment”
 - Ex: Free time during another activity, unplanned practice
- Abbreviated Time Frames: Short periods of time of approximately 30 minutes or less, typically occurring during a break or “free time”
- Transitional Time Frames: Time periods occurring in between activities unrelated to professional practice, most commonly occurring in attempts to fit practice into my schedule as it seemed fit, or the time arose or when trying to maximize learning opportunities in lieu of other personal priorities and responsibilities
 - Ex: Listening, interpreting, or viewing professional source while traveling to a family event

The majority of my deliberate practice and engagement occurred during protected time frames with 77 entries. This reaffirms and echoes much of the literature (Ericsson et al., 1993) regarding deliberate practice and time put into skill development. Abbreviated sessions and transitional periods made up a small portion of when practice occurred. With 17 and 11 entries respectively. Nonetheless, the time spent practicing in abbreviated sessions and transitional periods was still valuable in its own merit. The phenomenon of constructed practice, with 27 entries, presented itself as I often did not schedule time to practice, but time presented itself to me which prompted me to take advantage of it. This is a notable discovery as it relates to the reasoning why when practice occurs precedes *where* it occurs. As displayed in Figure 7, a significant portion of practice opportunities were constructed without forethought leading to deliberate practice.

Again, I realize how *when* we practice ought to be further researched and analyzed. Because I sought to merely study the broad scope or what practice looked like as a part-time interpreter, it did not meet the goal of this study to further analyze the relationship between value and time allocation given to practice. Thus, it would be recommended that future researchers consider this relationship. More consideration could be spent on the effects of compounding transitional and abbreviated practice and its similarities or differences related to protected time frames. Another more comprehensive approach may be to integrate other questions within my hierarchy to analyze and determine *what* types of practice (Figure 6) occur within specific time frames.

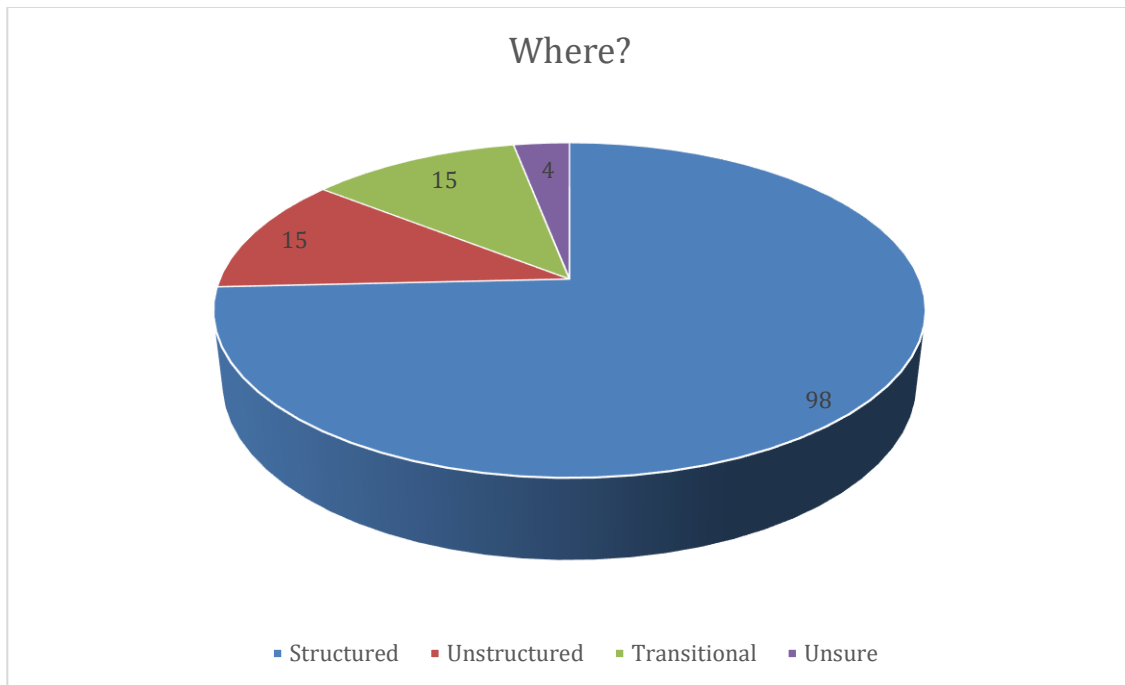
Additionally, this area is one that could be the most revealing in terms of practice as a part-time practitioner. Most interpreters working other jobs or dividing their responsibilities do not have the allotted time frames needed to deliberately practice. However, is there merit behind constructed, abbreviated, and transitional periods that could further be explored? In what contexts? A breadth of knowledge awaits to be discovered with this regard.

Where: Where do I practice?

This is the fifth and final step in my hierarchy of practice. This area was decimated into contrasting areas which are outlined using examples below:

Figure 8

Where?



- Structured versus unstructured settings:

- Structured: A designated workspace meant to foster productivity

- Personal office, organized desk area, interpreting work location or space

- Unstructured: A relaxed environment most likely to be used for leisure or other primary functions other than work-related tasks

- Couch, bedroom areas

- Transitional: Car, in between activities

This step is the final step of the hierarchy as it was most often a final byproduct of answers to the aforementioned questions. In other words, because I knew I would be engaging in job training at a designated time, the location of the training was apparent. Most professional engagement and practice were performed in structured spaces. Interestingly, there appeared to be

a correlation between the formality of the practice and the greater degree of structure within the workspace. Work assignments and professional development webinars using shared, or teacher-led leading experiences necessitated a structured workspace. Whereas independent practice constituting viewing, listening, or revising work allowed for a less structured atmosphere.

Out of 132 practice events, 98 events took place in structured settings, 15 events took place in unstructured settings, 15 events occurred in transitional settings, and four were uncertain due to ambiguity in data logging. Nonetheless, it is still apparent that structured settings were the predominant location of deliberate practice. Another location that could be further analyzed is that of in-person versus remote settings

- In person: An in-person interpreting assignment, job trainings, workshops
- Remote: Virtual conferences, professional development meetings, and group/peer meetings

These areas were not further decimated due to the majority of practice assignments overwhelmingly being remote. Further research could glean the value of remote versus in-person practice opportunities for practitioners or the feasibility of such settings. My inclination was to engage in practice via remote options due to my inability to travel or lack of time allotted to attend practice opportunities in person. Additionally, I did not always have in-person opportunities at my disposal.

Additionally, time constraints (*when*) would often influence my location (*where*). This prompts me to consider another question: Do part-time interpreters vary their location of practice more often than full-time interpreters? This is another question that awaits to be answered.

Implications of the Contextual Framework on Deliberate Practice

I venture to illustrate the sequential and reciprocal relationship within the questions asked and answered. Reflecting on the aforementioned research, I have described how the contextual framework influenced my ability to engage in deliberate practice. *Who* I am as a person, (my roles, responsibilities, and attempts at balancing it all), influenced *why* I wanted to engage in practice. *Why* I engaged in practice, (my ambition, motivation, and fortune), influenced *how* I went about doing the work and engaging in practice. *How* I practiced, (in peer groups, under direction of a leader, independently) often prompted me to consider *what* exactly I wanted to focus on in my work. Having identified *what* I needed to practice (interpersonal skills, technical skills, professional development, etc.) left only the consideration for *when* I would engage in this more specified practice (protected, constructed, abbreviated, or transitional time frames). Finally, *when* I implemented my plans would need to be supported by a location or venue (*where*; structured, unstructured, or transitional settings) to fulfill the answers to all my questions surrounding my practice.

I offer a brief example to better illustrate this framework. Let us take my analysis of the practice activity of my VRS shift and my Sorenson Connections activity highlighted below as an example.

Figure 9

Practice Log

21	VRS	4/13/2022	2-6pm	4	Work	VRS
22	Supervision	4/13/2022	7-8pm	1	Education	Supervision
23	Coaching	4/14/2022	10:15-11:15am	1	Education	Coaching
24	VRS	4/14/2022	3-6pm	4	Work	VRS
25	Sorenson Connections	4/15/2022	11-12pm	1	PD	Fingerspelling Comprehension

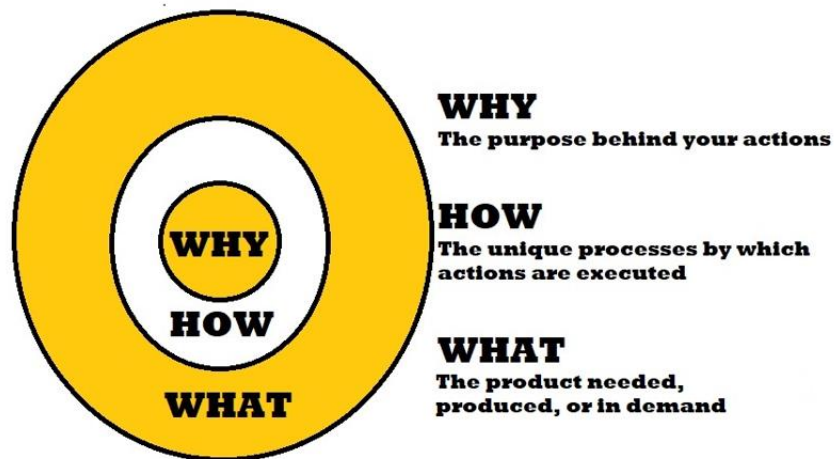
Because I am a novice interpreter (who) who once aspired to work VRS for years (why) I ended up landing a job by responding to an ad I conveniently came across (why), which then prompted me to work my shift independently and at times, shared (how), which then prompted me to utilize and apply the technical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills I have been developing over time (what) at a specific and designated time (when) and in a specific and designated location (where).

In looking at the Sorenson Connections activity highlighted above, I offer another example. Because I am a developing interpreter (who), I had been wanting to develop my skills as an interpreter (why) and was invited to participate in various webinars to continue skill development (why), which then prompted me to sign up for a particular group session with facilitators(how), where I then attended and practiced fingerspelling comprehension (what), at a specified time (when) and through a virtual platform (where).

Sinek (2009) is a researcher in the leadership field with two published titles focusing on the subject. Included in his work, *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*, Sinek (2009) offers a model to guide leaders to success. My research and offered model (Figure 4) is strikingly similar to Sinek’s (2009) model titled “the golden circle.”

Figure 10

The Golden Circle Model



Note: This model of the Golden Circle was presented to a local audience in 2009 at TEDxPuget Sound, an independent event. From *How great leaders inspire action* [video] by S. Sinek, September 2009. TEDxPugetSound.

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

While Sinek focuses on the individual and leadership, my research compares by using a similar format, but with respect to the concept of deliberate practice. The similarities between Sinek’s method and my own are noteworthy. However, it was not until my data had already been

analyzed and categorized through the lens of a hierarchy was I able to make the connection to Sinek's research. The main difference between our models is that mine includes *when* and *where*. Sinek does not include these categories. I assume this is because the primary three categories are most significant to his research goals. Additionally, *when* and *where* may be irrelevant in the context of Sinek's studies on leadership while in my focus on deliberate practice in interpreting it was unknown or often changing within my research design. In my research, I aimed to explore the entire context of deliberate practice for a part time interpreter which is why it is necessary to include these two areas.

As cited in Tiselius (2018), "Deakin et al. (2007, p. 303) suggested deliberate practice may be studied at the micro-level of a practice event, where the activity is explored in depth with both objective variables (such as time spent on different practice activities or time spent listening to instructions or discussing with the instructor) and subjective variables (such as evaluating the quality of the activity)" (p.7). This research attempted to do just this; however, as described within each domain, each of these objective and subjective variables could be delineated even further. Many of the variables I had initially been intent on studying (such as evaluating the quality of the activity) were unable to be studied at length in one holistic study. Each variable truthfully needs its own time and attention and could be dispersed among a collective group of researchers to undertake the feat of describing practice-like conditions (Tiselius, 2013) through united efforts.

Baker et al. (2014) assert: "The development of superior theoretical models will undoubtedly lead to clearer hypotheses that can be tested experimentally and longitudinally. Importantly, better theory produces stronger evidence, which could ultimately 'rule out' or 'confirm' the fundamental importance of training and/or heredity factors" (p.150). My

framework (Figure 4) is an unintended product, yet proposed solution in response to this assertion. In the future, researchers can use a framework like the one created (Figure 4) or the exact framework itself to answer lingering questions regarding deliberate practice.

One area that both my framework and Sinek's do not address is the quality of practice. I posit that all the factors within my framework combine to measure the quality of practice. Based on synthesis of anecdotal data (i.e., written reflections taken after a practice activity), my quality of practice was greater in protected time frames (when), structured locations (where), and professional development and job training (what) since I returned to these areas repeatedly. Further research can include the quality of practice emerging by comparing work samples and reflections on practice activities. This area began to be explored but was omitted from this iteration of the research due to the context of practice first needing to be thoroughly revealed.

A Note on Deliberate Practice and Deliberate Play

Deliberate practice and deliberate play are broad concepts that ought to be further deciphered and agreed upon prior to execution of a study. Determining whether an activity is *deliberate practice*, *deliberate play*, or both was unable to be prescribed with confidence after the study began and were largely defined based on opinion (e.g., If I was able to socialize or engaged in humor, it was thought to be tied to deliberate play more than deliberate practice). Clear descriptions for each philosophy of practice are needed to help guide researchers as well as descriptions for when these areas overlap in any degree. Findings did reveal that more research ought to be reviewed and more studies conducted to expand knowledge of deliberate play. Extensive knowledge of deliberate play will allow for practitioners to successfully incorporate this domain in interpreting practice and understand its relationship and benefit to deliberate practice.

Implications of The Inner Expert and The Part-Time Interpreter (PTI)'s Practice

The extent of this research shows what practice looks like for a part-time interpreter. However, it must be noted that the research does not explore the specific descriptors of a part-time interpreter. This research has successfully shown how context largely influences deliberate practice for a PTI. However, it would behoove researchers to broaden the study to analyze specific attributes of a PTI. For example, future scholars can decipher the number of hours a PTI engages in interpreting practice or professional development. PTIs who hold additional careers can be surveyed on the additional career(s) they hold while gathering qualitative data about how they manage their multiple roles and responsibilities (who). Having this additional information, the data can then be juxtaposed with my research and others about the contextual factors of practice considered for practitioners. More intricate studies could be conducted comparing the number of hours an interpreter works to the number of hours engaged in practice. The possibilities for future research are abundant.

As a part-time interpreter, I had to rely on my inner expert extensively. I had to adapt practice to maintain synergy in my day-to-day life. My gut response and intuition were necessary to discover the ways in which I engaged in practice across all categories labeled in my contextual framework. I had to become creative and maximize learning opportunities by constructing time frames and practicing in transitional spaces and time frames (when, where). I knew my available time was lacking and so I sought ways to use even the smallest units of time meet my needs of practicing. I also sought to make practice more enjoyable by playing games and socializing with others (how, what). I need to continue to develop my inner expert to find more creative and enjoyable methods to use in my practice. Using my inner expert, I made the most of my resources and was able to discover fortunate events (why) that caused me to further engage in

deliberate practice. Had I not consulted my inner expert, the part that makes me *who* I am as part-time interpreter, I may not have understood the amount of practice opportunities that I steadily engaged and instead strictly relied on effort, resources, and motivation (Ericsson et al., 1993) to define my practice.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

What is deliberate practice, really?

The purpose of the research was to create and discover the context of practice for a part-time interpreter. My aims included being able to answer the most basic questions in relation to practice: *who, what, when, where, why, and how*. Through my research, I discovered a natural hierarchy within my questioning. That led me to rearrange my line of questioning to the following: *who, why, what, how, when, where*. These questions are not asked arbitrarily. A natural, sequential order develops when a practitioner must contemplate how to engage in deliberate practice.

The initial reasoning behind this research was to discover how a part-time interpreter can execute deliberate practice and discover novel ways to perform deliberate practice. Novel approaches were unable to be comprehensively gathered, but there is evidence of value in deliberate play and self-care opportunities within deliberate practice sessions. Self-care and deliberate play were pleasurable components of my practice that led me to increase my attention to practice tasks. Regrettably, it was a challenge to discover or invent enticing self-care and deliberate play activities given my context as a part-time interpreter and I would have benefitted from some type of pre-selected list of activities to easily pull from. These types of references can continue to reveal themselves in upcoming research. To begin the outline for a proposed list of this sort to expand and circulate throughout the interpreting profession, I include a list of suggested deliberate practice and deliberate play activities (Appendix A).

Research quickly revealed that deliberate practice looks extremely different for a part-time interpreter. While Ericsson (2007; 2020) provides us with ample research regarding how skill is made with intentional time and practice, my inquiry has led me to believe deliberate

practice is not a one size fits all approach. However, to revisit Tiselius's findings (2018; 2013; 2012), the understanding of deliberate practice is subjective and ought to be analyzed based on the individual practitioner's unique circumstances. These initial circumstances are the line of questions (*who, why, what, how, when, where*) revealed in this research.

What Ericsson has offered is a prescribed utopia of deliberate practice. This research encourages individuals to brainstorm what constitutes deliberate practice when not afforded the utopia that Ericsson describes. My conclusions show that deliberate practice is not merely about time and intention but considers the person and their own *inner expert* (Reeves, 2014).

Deliberate practice, at least in the case of this part-time interpreter, includes my multiple roles and responsibilities, motivation, resources, available time, and my location at any given moment. Using this perspective, if researchers, scholars, and interpreter educators possess lingering qualms about the analyses of deliberate practice within this research, individuals may wish to substitute the term *deliberate practice* with the term highlighted by Herring et al. (2022) of *skill development-focused practice or (SDFP)*. My research and implications challenge the entire theory of deliberate practice by rendering this body of knowledge as subjective rather than the standard. Furthermore, deliberate practice could be argued to have multiple definitions of varying degrees and contexts. Deliberate practice will look different for a full-time parent or an Olympic gymnast. Evidence of success and achievement is a primary indicator of deliberate practice; however, there are other merits to consider that can be explored based on the individual.

As mentioned throughout my research, Ericsson et al. (1993) describes the act of deliberate practice involving the need for continuous, routine practice of skills. Throughout my practice plans, I targeted a variety of skills in a continuous manner. Unlike the research of Ericsson et al., I had to utilize my inner expert and practice in a way that was most conducive for

my success. Does that make my practice less deliberate? Revisiting my definitions of *deliberate* and *practice*; *deliberate* means intentional, directed effort and *practice* means an activity that targets a skill later to be applied to a goal and occurring without restrictions. Thus, by my own reasoning, my practice was deemed deliberate. I wonder if Ericsson would agree.

The Part Time Interpreter

This research was conducted with the experience of a part-time interpreter, myself, in mind. The attributes of a part-time interpreter are not studied. Instead, the implications of what it means to be a part-time interpreter engaging in deliberate practice was the focus of this research. It will be beneficial to grow existing literature about the traits of a part-time interpreter. As research develops and part-time interpreters are studied, my current study will be readily available to supplement the literature and resources this group of practitioners will undoubtedly need.

As a part-time interpreter, I have made my framework accessible and aligned to the potential needs of others, especially myself. My *who* as a part-time interpreter greatly impacts my ability to participate in effective practice. However, I now possess a unique frame of reference that allows me to alter my perspective of deliberate practice while adapting deliberate practice to work for me and my circumstances. I am enthusiastic about pursuing deliberate practice with a new vantage point and to continue my action research on how my skills improve over time.

Practice in Context

Beyond the scope of what represents deliberate practice and what does not, this research also shed light on what practice entailed for a part-time interpreter. I needed the role of the *inner expert* considerably when engaging in deliberate practice. This *inner expert* could also be

explained as my *who* in my line of questioning. Who I am as a person and practitioner largely dictated my next steps in engaging in practice--deliberate or not. Similar to Sinek's (Chaffey, 2022) framework on leadership, my inner expert drove my next three steps toward practice: my *why*, *how*, and *what*. These three questions fell in a natural sequence and set the foundation for the last two steps, *when* and *where*. This sequence of questioning was a natural progression to guide my practice as a part-time practitioner.

The contextual framework I offer lays the foundation of how we can effectively begin our deliberate practice. The *who* of deliberate practice remains to be our personal and professional identities--our roles, responsibilities, and the synergy of these various identities. The *why* of deliberate practice is our motivation, networking and proximity, and fortunate events. The *how* of deliberate practice includes teacher or mentor led opportunities, shared leading opportunities, or independent practice. The *what* of deliberate practice (see Appendix A) encompasses numerous areas: professional development, job training, personal work samples, intrapersonal and interpersonal practice, compensated field experience, preparation, and an assortment of miscellaneous intentional practice occasions including social messaging correspondence, listening to Podcasts, observations of other interpreters, and more. The *when* of deliberate practice includes protected time frames, abbreviated sessions, and transitional periods. The *where* of deliberate practice includes structured, unstructured, and transitional locations.

This type of framework can serve not only part-time practitioners, but all individuals who are unsure if their practice is deliberate. Using this sequence can support individuals to construct a deliberate practice plan that works for their respective needs. Initially, I hypothesized that a methodology including a practice plan targeting a specified number of hours over a specified number of days (Table 1) was what it meant to deliberately practice and maintain Ericsson et al.

(1993)'s standards of effort, resources, and motivation. However, my research has corroborated Hambrick et al. (2020)'s findings and simultaneously revealed that the concept of deliberate practice is subjective. Hambrick et al. (2020) leave it up to the readers if the deliberate practice view is defensible; however, they emphasize that factors involved in deliberate practice such as “full attention” are measured based on relative statements and cannot be empirically verified. Thus, my own contextual framework (Figure 4) of practice may offer a better option to practitioners of a tailored indicator of deliberate practice as it provided me while I executed practice to advance my skills within the profession.

Summary

My findings corroborate Tiselius's (2013) assertions that interpreters (including part-time interpreters) unconsciously engage in deliberate practice. In this research, I have unpacked what Tiselius could mean by “unconscious” by offering a framework to justify the untraditional, practice-like conditions that interpreters, especially part-time interpreters, implement on a regular basis. Ericsson et al. (1993) divide activity into three types: *work* (defined as performing the activity and being remunerated as a professional), *play* (defined as performing the activity for pure pleasure), and *deliberate practice* (defined as continuous, routine practice of skills). Outside the work of Ericsson et al. (1993) and my own developed contextual framework inspired by Tiselius (2013), there appears to exist subjectivity regarding deliberate practice. There is likely to be an ongoing discussion within scholarly literature circles as to which practice constitutes *deliberate practice* and why. For the purposes of this research, deliberate practice is both conscious and unconscious. Continued research may decipher the variables within each and measure the level of quality of unconscious deliberate practice, conscious deliberate practice, or a combination of both. Our intentionality in *deliberate practice* (or whatever term the individual

chooses to substitute), or our conscious versus unconscious practice behaviors, have yet to be fully considered with respect to deliberate practice. Due to the demands imposed by daily life, it is time to expand our understanding of deliberate practice to align with our individual capacities and involve our inner experts.

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APPENDIX A

Suggested Deliberate Practice Activities	Suggested Deliberate Play Activities
Recording “warm” and “cold” work samples	Playing trivia games to increase background knowledge of interpreting related content
Sending work samples to peer for review and reviewing and practicing peer notes	Browsing, researching websites for information to broaden background knowledge
Practice workbooks (e.g., Carol Patrie’s <i>Effective Interpreting Series</i>)	Signing recreationally when engaged in other activities (e.g., interpreting a video game or TV show someone is watching)
Webinars, workshops, professional development	Sending video messages using target language to engage with peers and friends on social media apps (e.g. Marco Polo)
Group mentoring and practice sessions	Listening to/interpreting Podcasts on language related subject matter
Organizational led practice groups	Reading and researching new words
Practicing specific skills through creative means (e.g., drawing) *	Watching TV and noting unfamiliar phrases
Sorenson Connections	Networking/social interactions and events with Deaf community members and interpreting colleagues
Interpreting field-experience preparation (“Prep Time”)	Selecting engaging source material (e.g., interpreting kids cartoons)
Graduate school course requirements	Impromptu YouTube viewing of ASL/fingerspelling videos
Supervisions/Case-conferencing	One-on-one peer practicing and conversation about language concepts
Virtual and in-person field experiences	ASL games that target varying skills (e.g., Fingerspelling states and their respective capitals)
Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs) (Smith, 2014)	Teaching a friend, colleague sign language
Interpreter Observations	Ask hearing people (with no ASL background) how they would sign/depict certain concepts (e.g., Ask your spouse how they would describe steering a ship)
Job Training	Play charades!
Mentoring/Coaching	Facial Expression game. Locate a partner. One person conveys an emotion; the partner copies it and mirrors it back to them. The partner

	copying will guess the emotion being conveyed.
	Attend Improv comedy shows and incorporate gestures learned by viewing the actors
	Research Deaf vendors that create ASL card games and purchase their inventory to engage in play
*Based on this researcher's personal perspective, the activity was viewed as mostly <i>deliberate practice</i> or <i>deliberate play</i> . However, it can easily be assumed to be both considering both the intentional and unintentional energy put into the activity.	