

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 455

EC 307 453

AUTHOR Anderson, Nancy; Easterbrooks, Susan R.
TITLE Current Status of Educational Interpreter Certification for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
PUB DATE 1999-04-16
NOTE 9p.; Paper resented at the Annual Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children (Charlotte, NC, April 16, 1999).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Certification; *Deafness; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; *Interpreters; Minimum Competencies; *Occupational Information; *Personnel Needs; Rural Schools; State Standards; Training; Work Environment

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the outcomes of a National Task Force on Educational Interpreting that was established to examine and clarify roles and responsibilities, training and certification, working conditions, and other issues and needs concerning the involvement of educational interpreters in regular education environments. The task force found: (1) educational interpreters need to be recognized as members of the educational team; (2) the increasing number of students with deafness enrolled in the mainstream has caused a crisis in availability of prepared professionals; (3) many students have no interpreter or an underqualified interpreter; (4) many systems do not have supervisory staff with sufficient expertise to evaluate educational interpreters; and (5) job descriptions for educational interpreters vary greatly from one setting to another. The task force recommended the development of certification standards and the promotion of these standards to the states. Since that time, 11 states have developed and implemented standards. The problem of availability of personnel remains critical. The report discusses the roles and responsibilities of the educational interpreter, special problems in the rural environment, the use of teachers of students with deafness as interpreters, and the role of the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education. (CR)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

**Current Status of Educational Interpreter Certification
For Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

Nancy Anderson, Information Specialist
The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education

Susan R. Easterbrooks, Associate Professor
Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education
Georgia State University

**Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children,
Charlotte, North Carolina, April 16, 1999**

Background

In 1985, a National Task Force on Educational Interpreting was established to examine and clarify roles and responsibilities, training and certification, working conditions, and other issues and needs concerning the involvement of educational interpreters in regular education environments (Hurwitz, 1991). This task force was made up of representatives from the following organizations:

- American Society for Deaf Children
- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf
- Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf
- Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf
- Conference of Interpreter Trainers
- National Association of the Deaf
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The task force report is available by writing the Rochester Institute of Technology, Campus Connections, P.O. Box 9887, Rochester, NY 14623-0887. In essence, the report found the following:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

1
2

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Anderson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC
FC 307453

- educational interpreters need to be recognized as members of the educational team;
- the increasing number of deaf students enrolled in the mainstream has caused a crisis in availability of prepared professionals;
- many students have no interpreter or an underqualified interpreter;
- many systems do not have supervisory staff with sufficient expertise to evaluate educational interpreters, and;
- job descriptions for educational interpreters vary greatly from one setting to another.

The Task Force recommended the development of certification standards and the promotion of these standards to the states. Since that time, some states have developed and implemented standards. The problem of availability of personnel remains critical.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Educational Interpreter

According to Seal (1998), the educational interpreter is responsible for the following:

- a. to interpret and/or transliterate according to the specifications of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
- b. to utilize planning time to meet with teachers and staff as deemed appropriate by the educational team and/or supervisor;
- c. to prepare for demanding course material (teacher lectures, videotapes, tests) as necessary for successful interpreting and/or transliterating;
- d. to demonstrate professionalism in all interactions with administrators, teachers, and staff, with parents and students, and with visitors or individuals unfamiliar with the

educational setting;

e. to demonstrate professionalism in all ethical areas, especially in applying the Code of Ethics to the educational setting;

f. to assist with other duties as determined appropriate by the educational team and/or supervisor; and

g. to participate in self-evaluations as determined appropriate by the supervisor. (p.23)

Educational interpreters face many challenges. Some students for whom they are interpreting are poor or non-attenders. Some interpreters have difficulty in keeping the lines clearly drawn among the simultaneous roles of interpreter/tutor/advocate. Often schools assume that the interpreter should be available to interpret in all locations and at all hours, even outside of school. Sometimes parents who have little knowledge of sign language will expect the interpreter to tutor them. Oftentimes students who have not studied or have not paid attention will blame the interpreter, stating that their own poor performance is actually a result of poor interpreting. Many times interpreters are asked to interpret material which is challenging and for which they may or may not have been given sufficient time to prepare. In addition, many students are often placed with the same interpreter year after year. This presents a particular challenge to the student/interpreter relationship. Seal (1998) presents suggestions for best practices which may assist educational interpreters in deal with these difficult situations.

Special Problems in the Rural Environment

Interpreters who work in rural environments are especially at risk because they may not have access either to a support system or a network of colleagues with whom they may share ideas. Further, rural school systems may be in a positions where they must hire the “best

available” (Yarger, 1999); this often leads to the hiring of underqualified interpreters. Yarger (1999) recommends the following actions for supporting educational interpreting in rural environments:

- provide a provisional period for mentoring;
- provide inservice training with respect for roles and responsibilities if preservice training was insufficient;
- establish a system to network with other interpreters in similar rural environments (such as an e-mail listservice);
- establish easy access to a state-wide lending library;
- establish at least minimum standards for hiring (the stick to them!);
- provide inservice in the process of collaborating with teachers, then collaborate);
- participate where possible on IEP teams (this will establish the interpreter as a professional member of the child’s team); and,
- recognize the need to provide professional pay for this professional service.

Current Status of State’s Standards

Approximately 11 states have standards for educational interpreters, although some who do not are in the process of developing these. For more information, contact the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education at 800-641-7824 or www.special-education-careers.org.

Current Status of Educational Interpreter Training

As students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing move into the general education arena, the need for interpreters becomes significant. According to the 20th Annual Report to the Congress on

the Implementation of IDEA, the need for interpreters is high among the field of related service personnel and includes the need for interpreters to children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The “Teacher as Interpreter” Issue

More and more, teachers of the deaf are being asked to do double duty as both teacher and interpreter. This is a particular challenge as the roles vary in very important ways. Whereas the student may be accustomed to turning to the teacher of the deaf for clarification, in the general classroom he or she must now turn to the general education teacher. This may require a period of assisting the student to transition from the teacher’s role as teacher to his or her role as interpreter. Secondly, many uninformed administrators assume that a teacher of the deaf is automatically qualified to interpret. This is not necessarily so. In fact, only two states (Texas and Minnesota) have established requirements for minimum skills in sign language for teachers of the deaf. The State of Texas has six different pathways for teachers to acquire validation of their signing skills. The State of Minnesota requires its teachers to have an intermediate rating on the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) (Minnesota Statue, 1992). Intermediate level is defined as:

Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some (adequate) elaboration. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary (may have several sign misproductions), with fluency generally characterized by moderate signing pace and some inappropriate pauses/hesitations. Demonstrates some sign language grammatical features in connected discourse, but not controlled. Fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and phrasing of questions may be needed. (Newell & Caccamise, 1994)

Until all states have sign language requirements for teachers of the deaf and for educational interpreters, the lines of demarcation between interpreters and teachers will remain blurred.

CEC/NCPSE's Role

The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (NCPSE) at The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) provides resources and information for individuals seeking careers and training in working with children with disabilities, including the profession of educational interpreting. NCPSE/CEC is supportive and aware of the national critical need for quality, certified educational interpreters. The National Clearinghouse suggests the following resources which may be useful to the public.

1. The *EdiTORial* Newsletter: This newsletter is for educational interpreters and transliterators of the Registry for Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). This newsletter includes articles and information from all regions of the United States about what is happening on the subject of educational interpreters in their states. There is a small fee to receive this newsletter. For more information, contact Malina Lindell at 541-276-6992 X 146. E-mail malina_lindell@umesd.k12.or.us: www.rid.org.
2. The National Educational Interpreter Conference (NEIC): This annual conference presents various resources, workshops and information for and about the educational interpreter. This conference is presented by several partners including but not limited to: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID); Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNet) (CA office); Gallaudet University Regional Interpreter Training Project; Gallaudet University Regional Center. For more information about the 1999 NEIC, contact Jane Nunes at Norther Essex Community College. 978-556-4341 Voice/TTY or E-mail to NETAC@necc.mass.edu.
3. Other organizations and resources for information, grants, certification information include but are not limited to: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), National Association for the Deaf (NAD), National Institute on Communication Disorders, The

Council on Education of the Deaf (CED).

4. Web site and web searches: The Internet holds a wealth of resources for those interested in the field of educational interpreting. Also, NCPSE has an educational interpreter resource fact sheet on the web at www.special-ed-careers.org.
5. Funding source information at the Federal level: The U.S. Department of Education/Office of Special Education (OSER) oversees information and grants for Educational Interpreter Training, Project EITP. The following contacts may be useful: Mary Ann McDermott; Project Officer, EITP 202-205-8876. Maryann_McDermott@ed.gov and Mary Lovely; Project Officer for Interpreter Training Projects (ITP). 202-205-9393. Mary_Lovely@ed.gov.
6. Book: An excellent source for guidance on interpreting issues is *Best Practices in Educational Interpreting* written by Brenda Chafin Seal and published by Allyn & Bacon, Inc. For more information, call Sign Enhancers, Inc. at 800-767-4461 or E-mail an order to sign@signenhancers.com.
7. Article: Washington Post, April 29, 1999. "At Colleges, Lack of Interpreters for the Deaf, Frustration Grows for Hearing Impaired Students" by Tom Jackson.

Summary

There is at present a national crisis in availability of skilled, credentialed educational interpreters at all ages and academic levels for deaf and hard of hearing students. This problem has several sources: the lack of interpreter training programs, the difference between public interpreting and educational interpreting, and the need for more states to have certification requirements as well as for national certification standards, and the need for salary standards. The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (NCPSE) at the Council for

Exceptional Children (CEC) understands this profession's crisis and has begun its support by developing lists of resources available and accessible to the public. It is getting the word "out" by providing resources to state administrators, principals and parents, and by working cooperatively with such organizations as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Council on Education of the Deaf, among others. For information updates, visit the Clearinghouse's website at www.special-ed-careers.org.

References

Hurwitz, T.A. (1991). Report from the National Task Force on Education Interpreting. In Educational Interpreting into the 1990s. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Minnesota State Statutes (1992) Section 128.10, Sec 32, subdivision 1.

Newell, W., & Caccamise, F. (1994). Sign communication proficiency interview (SCPI) rating scale. In F. Caccamise & W. Newell (Eds.), Manual for the sign communication proficiency interview (SCPI). Rochester, NY: National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

Seal, B.C. (1998). Best practices in educational interpreting. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Title: <i>Current Status of Educational Interpreter Certification for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.</i> | |
| Author(s): <i>Nancy Anderson, Susan Easterbrook</i> | |
| Corporate Source: | Publication Date: |

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

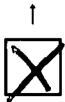
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1



Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

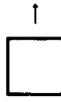
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A



Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B



Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, →
release

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Signature: <i>Nancy Anderson</i> | Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>Nancy Anderson</i> | |
| Organization/Address: <i>The National Clearinghouse</i> | Telephone: <i>421-6475 (703)</i> | FAX: <i>703 564-1637</i> |
| | E-Mail Address: <i>nancya@cec.spd.org</i> | Date: <i>10/8/99</i> |



(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

| |
|------------------------|
| Publisher/Distributor: |
| Address: |
| Price: |

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

| |
|----------|
| Name: |
| Address: |

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

| |
|---|
| Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: |
|---|

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-953-0263
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>