MODEL STANDARDS
FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL
INTERPRETERS FOR DEAF STUDENTS

AND

SUGGESTED OPTIONS FOR ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION

Presented by the

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

and the

Council on Education of the Deaf
INTRODUCTION

In the years since the passage of PL 94-142, an increasing number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students have received the services of educational interpreters in mainstream classrooms. This was a new employment area, and as it has grown so too have concerns about the quality of the services provided to the students and the skills of those serving them.

The National Task Force on Educational Interpreting was established in 1985 with representatives from seven national organizations related to deafness:

- 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

This Task Force collected information from around the nation over a four year period, including information on job titles and descriptions, the role and responsibility of the educational interpreter, hiring and working conditions, and other areas of concern related to educational interpreting with a primary focus on the K-12 levels. During its work, the Task Force found that the field of educational interpreting drew from the two disciplines of interpreting and of education, and that skills needed were different in some respects from those of either a teacher of deaf or hard of hearing students or an interpreter for deaf adults.

The Task Force completed its work with a comprehensive report in 1989: Educational Interpreting for Deaf Students. That report concluded with three recommendations, that 1. the Council on Education of the Deaf (the national body that certifies professionals involved in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students and approves teacher training programs) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (the national organization that evaluates and certifies interpreters for deaf persons) should establish a joint RID/CEC Ad Hoc Educational Interpreter Standards Committee to develop model certification standards for educational interpreters, encourage adoption of these standards at the national and state levels, and explore the feasibility of joint RID/CEC certification based on these standards; 2. the report of the Task Force should be the major guidance document for the joint committee, and 3. a member of the Task Force be appointed by the CEC and RID as the committee's chairperson and facilitator.

In response to Recommendation 3, Gary Sanderson and Dr. Gerilce Gustason were appointed co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Committee. Three educators were approved by CEC as members of a committee to work on these standards:

- Jane Krahe of Arizona
- Rebecca Kahn of Los Angeles, and
- Martha Stipes of Oregon.

Three interpreters were approved by RID for this committee:

- Charlene Brewer of New Mexico,
- Karen LeFebvre of New York, and
- Maggie Holt of Wisconsin.

In addition, Dr. Diane Castle of New York was appointed by both CEC and RID.
A larger advisory committee was also approved by RID and CED, including the following individuals:


These two committees met jointly for an initial meeting at which they reviewed the work of the Task Force and began the task of responding to the charge to develop model standards. The advisory committee provided feedback thereafter to the smaller working committee and approved the final standards, which were then submitted to and approved by the boards of the Registry for Interpreters of the Deaf, and the Council on Education of the Deaf and its four constituent organizations: the Alexander Graham Bell Association of the Deaf, the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf, the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf, and the Association of College Educators of the Hearing Impaired.

The attached document is the result: model certification standards for educational interpreters. It must be remembered that these standards were based on the information compiled by the Task Force on the role and responsibilities of educational interpreters, and the Task Force recommendations for areas in which training was needed. RID and CED, like the Task Force, are well aware that these standards are well beyond current training backgrounds of most educational interpreters currently working at K-12 levels. They recognize the fact that training programs for interpreters have not in the past been geared to include all of the areas herein. They also recognize that the level of training recommended may ultimately mean more advanced study than is presently available. This suggests the need for a "grandfather clause" which protects experienced and qualified educational interpreters presently working in the field. At the same time, the RID and CED recognize that not all working educational interpreters currently have the desired skills or knowledge. Accordingly, when considering certification, the RID and CED suggest several options or paths to certification as an educational interpreter. These options are presented in part B. It is also recognized that current pay standards in many states do not yet reflect the level of preparation recommended by these competencies. However, all competencies were drawn from the Task Force report and the judgment of professionals in the field, including working educational interpreters. Pay scales must depend upon levels of skill, experience, and training. Development of such scales and approval of certification standards must go hand in hand, while provision is made for working educational interpreters. The difficulty many school districts currently face in finding qualified applicants for such positions must also be recognized.

The certification required of personnel working in educational settings is traditionally the responsibility of each state. It was felt that this should also be true of educational interpreters working in the K-12 setting, with these model standards as guides.

Programs for the professional preparation of interpreters are expanding but are not yet available in every state. The options for routes to certification recognize the service of educational interpreters who have worked in the field for some time without the benefit of such preparation programs. It is important, however, to stress that appropriate evaluations and courses must be made available to ensure that the skills and academic preparation of these "grandfathered" educational interpreters are equivalent to those of students emerging from educational interpreter preparation programs.
The chairs would like to thank those individuals and organizations that made the work of the committee possible: Dr. William Castle of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Dr. William Woodrick of the University of Tennessee for providing funds which enabled the committee to meet, the boards of RID and CED for their patience and guidance while the document was in development, the Conference of Interpreter Trainers for their invaluable feedback on each draft, the advisory committee, and especially the members of the working committee who spent countless hours going over draft after draft.

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PART A.

COMPETENCIES FOR CERTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL
INTERPRETERS

presented by

THE REGISTRY OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF
THE COUNCIL ON EDUCATION OF THE DEAF

I. General Education

It is expected that the Educational Interpreter will be able to provide services in a wide variety of content areas within the school's overall curriculum. In order to have the flexibility to provide educational interpreting services K-12, he or she must be able to draw on a broad spectrum of knowledge in the humanities, the sciences, and the arts, often collectively called general studies. The Educational Interpreter must have basic knowledge in the following:

A. English: Vocabulary, spelling, grammar, reading, writing, and literature.

B. Humanities: Salient features of the humanities, philosophy, and the arts; general understanding of major principles and/or events and significant figures.

C. Physical Sciences: Principles and common terms used in the physical sciences including mathematics, physics, biology, and chemistry and in computer science.

D. Social Sciences: Major principles and/or events and significant figures in history, psychology, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology, with particular attention to human development and language development.

E. Public Speaking: Public speaking and acting techniques, use of appropriate voice presentation techniques, ability to convey information through facial expressions, body postures, pantomime.

F. Interpersonal Skills: Interpersonal communication techniques and skills, including the ability to interact effectively with peers, supervisors, children, and parents.

II. Foundations in Education and Deafness

Educational interpreters work with a variety of deaf and hard of hearing students of different ages and grade levels. To help ensure the successful functioning of these students in the mainstream, the role of the educational interpreter requires knowledge of, but not necessarily skill in, the following:

A. Communication: Group dynamics and human relations, cross cultural communication issues including deaf-hearing and multiethnic/multicultural, communication modalities used by deaf individuals, including: American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, Pidgin Sign English, Oral,
speech, speecheading, and Cued Speech; other communication techniques used with hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and deaf multihandicapped individuals.

B. Hearing impairment: hearing impairment in children and adults, knowledge of definitions, etiologies, demographics; psychological, social, and cultural conditions; audiological assessment, use and maintenance of assistive listening devices, technical communication aids such as TDDs, decoders, signalling systems, etc.

C. Deaf and hard of hearing people in society: deafness and the community, history, culture, community, family, and work; community organizations and agencies of and/or serving deaf and hard of hearing persons, their philosophies, relationships and services.

D. Human development: Psychological, social and language maturation stages, learning and its facilitation; age appropriate behavior patterns, first and second language acquisition; relevance of childhood deafness to developmental processes.

E. Education: history, philosophies, organizational structures, issues and trends at all educational levels; educational psychology.

F. Special Education: The variety of handicapping conditions and special needs and services relative to education; public laws, policies, multidisciplinary team processes, and attitudes relating to handicapped and other minority students; parenting the exceptional child.

G. Education of deaf and hard of hearing students: History, philosophies and techniques in educating deaf and hard of hearing students in various types of programs; educational placement alternatives and demographics; special considerations for placement and services to deaf students with additional handicaps; parenting a deaf or hard of hearing child; laws, regulations and policies affecting the education and placement of students; support services available to deaf students in regular and special schools; professional and parent organizations.

H. Major curriculum areas: concepts and vocabulary used throughout the elementary and secondary level in academic, vocational and extracurricular areas.

I. Interpersonal relations: Strategies for professionalism in attitudes, judgment, and behavior; flexibility and diplomacy; working with administrators, colleagues, students, parents, and others; conflict resolution.

III. Foundations In Interpretation

All interpreting requires a unique mental process. The educational interpreter should have a foundation in interpretation before beginning the study of educational interpreting. The interpreter must have knowledge of theory, psycholinguistics, and ethical behavior both in general and specific to the educational setting.
The educational interpreter will have basic knowledge of the process of interpreting, and interpreting for deaf persons, in the following areas:

A. Theory: Theory and psycholinguistic processes involved in interpretation.

B. Interpreting: history, settings, organizations, and certification processes; interpreting as a career.

C. Ethics: Codes of ethics and their applications to various settings.

D. Research, trends, and issues: Interpretation; interpreting for deaf people.

E. Physical considerations: Physical health and stress management, techniques for reducing visual and physical fatigue and overload of both student and interpreter.

F. Techniques: Settings and situations, including group interpreting, one-to-one interpreting, telephone interpreting, interpreting to media, prioritizing input from multiple speakers and environmental noises for interpretation.

IV. Educational Interpreting

The role and function of the educational interpreter is unique to the educational setting. This specialized role calls for the integration of a number of different responsibilities. As a member of an educational team, the educational interpreter needs to be able to work cooperatively with numerous other persons and contribute specialized knowledge.

A. Role and responsibilities: variety of roles at different age/grade levels and in different educational settings, including attention, comprehension, behavior, vocabulary clarification, and responsibilities under the Individual Education Plan.

B. Multidisciplinary team: Understand role and responsibilities of members of the multidisciplinary team, and function of educational interpreter as a member of the team, including development, implementation, and revision of the Individual Education Plan.

C. Ethical codes and standards: as applied to educational interpreting, including confidentiality, judging when to use verbatim sign-to-voice; professional behavior.

D. Student development: Encouraging student independence, including use of communication skills.

E. Educational support services: tutoring techniques and responsibilities; notetaking; use of visuals; specialized seating.

F. Orientation to deafness: information about teaching sign language and about deafness for the lay person; referral sources on general topics relating to deafness; when, how, and to whom to make referrals; promoting an expanded communication environment for the deaf or hard of hearing student; fostering student participation in activities.
G. Communication comprehension: monitoring student understanding in class using the communication method designated by the IEP.

H. Professional development: Planning a program of professional development for improving job-related skills.

V. Communication and Educational Interpreting Skills

Educational interpreters serve students with a variety of communication skills and styles. The skills of the educational interpreter are vital to the success of these students in mainstream settings. Therefore, the educational interpreter must demonstrate communication, interpretation and/or transliteration skills in the following areas:

A. Receptive Communication Skills: The educational interpreter should demonstrate ability to understand students through speech, speechreading, signs, and/or Cued Speech as appropriate. Educational interpreters specializing in the use of signs should demonstrate ability to understand a variety of students at different age levels in at least two of the following: ASL, MCE, PSE.

B. Expressive Communication Skills: The educational interpreter should demonstrate the ability to make himself/herself understood to a variety of students at a variety of age levels through speech, signs, and/or Cued Speech as appropriate. Educational interpreters specializing in the use of signs should demonstrate ability to make themselves understood to students in at least two of the following: ASL, MCE, PSE.

C. Educational Interpreting Skills, to include one or more of the following:
1. Interpret from spoken English to American Sign Language and from American Sign Language to spoken English.
2. Transliterate from spoken English to Manually Coded English and from Manually Coded English to spoken English.
3. Transliterate from spoken English to Pidgin Sign English and from Pidgin Sign English to spoken English.
4. Orally transliterate from spoken English to visible English and visible English to spoken English.
5. Cue from spoken English to Cued Speech and from Cued Speech to spoken English.

VI. Observation and Practicum

The multifaceted aspects of the educational interpreting task require observation and performance of the job roles and responsibilities in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The goal of the observation/practicum component is to provide direct experience in the application of competencies listed in sections I-V of this document. Educational interpreters will gain this experience through:
A. Observation: The educational interpreter should have an opportunity to observe and participate in a variety of levels and settings throughout his or her preparation.

B. Evaluation: An evaluation of skills for the mode in which the educational interpreter is receiving training (e.g. ASL interpreting, Cued Speech transliteration, oral transliteration, etc.) must be passed prior to a practicum placement.

C. Practicum Experience
   It is recommended that a semester (or the equivalent) of full time practicum be required. Participation in at least two supervised practicum experiences at different educational levels and settings is recommended.
PART B.
SUGGESTED ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION AS
AN EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER

Certification as an Educational Interpreter K-12 is a very new concept. Mainstream placements for deaf and hard-of-hearing students increased markedly after the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, and many of the individuals now working with these students began as instructional aides. There were until recently no training programs focusing on educational interpreting K-12. The implementation of standards must take account of these facts and recognize the need of these individuals for certification, while at the same time providing for certification of individuals completing newly developed programs of specialized training as educational interpreters.

I. PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR CURRENTLY WORKING EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETERS

This is a five-year, non-renewable certification for:

A. Persons who have completed a formal interpreter preparation program with a certificate of completion, AA degree, or higher.

B. Persons who have received interpreter certification from a statewide or nationally recognized organization or certifying body.

C. Persons who have been working for a minimum of four years as an educational interpreter in a K-12 setting.

The requirements for each of the above groups for the granting of a provisional certificate are either A, B, or C.

BACKGROUND

A. Completion of interpreter preparation program with non-educational interpreting focus

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT

1. Two years of full time equivalent educational interpreting K-12 and recommendation of supervisor

OR

2. Documented evidence of satisfactory completion of 21 additional credits or CEUs or equivalent. ¹

BACKGROUND

B. Certificate from statewide or nationally recognized organization or certifying body

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT

1. Two years of full time equivalent educational interpreting K-12 and recommendation of supervisor

¹ See Attachment 1 for list of recommended coursework areas.
OR

2. Documented evidence of satisfactory completion of 21 additional credits or CEUs or equivalent.¹

C. A minimum of four years of full time equivalent experience as an educational interpreter K-12 with recommendation of supervisor.

A skills evaluation recognized by a state or national level body

STANDARD CERTIFICATION FOR CURRENTLY WORKING EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETERS

Standard certification may be obtained by individuals who have met all of the requirements for one of the Provisional Certification options listed above

PLUS

1. Documented evidence of satisfactory completion of 21 ADDITIONAL credits or CEUs in educational interpreting areas within the preceding five years.

AND

2. A minimum of two years successful experience at the K-12 level, with recommendation by supervisor.

II. FOR INDIVIDUALS GRADUATING FROM EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER PREPARATION PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP THE COMPETENCIES APPROVED BY THE CED/RID

I. PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATION

Provisional certification will be automatically granted to graduates of Educational Interpreter Preparation Programs whose programs cover the competencies approved by the CED/RID. This certification is for a five year period and is not renewable.

II. STANDARD CERTIFICATION

The standard certification will be granted to Educational Interpreter Preparation Program graduates who receive Provisional Certification upon the completion of two years of successful work experience at the K-12 level upon the recommendation of their supervisor.
ATTACHMENT 1

If the interpreter preparation program from which a degree or certificate of completion was obtained did not include the following, the 21 credits should be in these areas:

- Introduction to Education
- Introduction to Special Education
- Introduction to Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
- Child Development
- Introduction to Educational Interpreting
  - Paraprofessional Skills (including tutoring, media usage, instruction of sign language/deaf awareness classes, etc.)
  - Educational Interpreting Seminar
  - or
  - additional skills development courses related to educational interpreting.