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Dr. Carolyn Ball
VRSII executive director

Director's Message

The VRS Interpreting Institute (VRSII) is a unique learning place. The impact and lasting effects of our programs can be seen in the people who attend the VRSII, those with whom we collaborate and in their programs. We had the opportunity to see these effects during a recent Educator

Empower Series (EES) training at the University

of North Florida (UNF). As mentioned in the previous issue of the *Connector* newsletter, in 2016, the VRSII took this educator training series "on the road." UNF, one of the first universities with whom the VRSII ever had the opportunity to collaborate, was the site of the first EES "on the road" training. It was amazing to be on UNF's beautiful campus and to have 20 interpreter educators collaborating with the VRSII's teaching team. This was the first EES class held off the VRSII campus and provided a great collaboration opportunity for those who are unable to travel long distances. One of the most amazing features of the training was seeing the networking and camaraderie being established. Often, interpreter educators work alone or are very isolated. When we saw the entire group together, it became clear how this type of class can help interpreter educators feel supported and included.

The next EES course will be held at Baker College during September and again at the University of

Arizona in October. We look forward to working with educators at those educational institutions.

Another example of the VRSII's impact was observed June 17, 2016, during the online National Interpreter Education Center (NIEC) Teaching Slam. In the opening of that training, NIEC director, Trudy Schafer, thanked the VRSII for the role it played during March 2015, in providing an initial gathering place in Salt Lake City for interpreter educators to gather and produce teaching curriculum. The 2015 March gathering was ultimately the source of many of the teaching samples provided at the Teaching Slam in 2016. The Teaching Slam was a first-of-a-kind event that brought together leading interpreter education instructors, leading-edge resources and a fast-paced delivery system that would expose participants to some of the best instruction in the field of interpreting education.

Another VRSII program that has been impactful to the field of interpreting education is the SVRS Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award <http://www.vrsii.com/programs/iep>. This year, the winner of the award was St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minn. As part of the award, the VRSII offers the "Innovator Showcase," a three-day event that gathers educators on the award winner's campus to share best practices. Paula Gajewski Mickelson, chair of the ASL and Interpreting department at St. Catherine University, described winning this award and participating in the subsequent event as, "A space for educators to take a pause, have creature comforts well taken care of, so we can focus on what is important – our work with students and each other."

It is through these and other unique programs that the VRSII continues to play a significant role in training future interpreters and interpreter educators. What a magnificent gift to us all.

Educator Empowerment Series Go On the Road

This year, the popular Educator Empowerment Series (EES) classes will be presented in areas around the country to better reach educators, learn about their programs and increase collaboration between the VRSII and interpreter educator programs (IEPs).

The 2016 course offered in this traveling format is called "Interpreter Education and Assessment Cornerstone." In this course, participants explore a variety of approaches to all three states of assessment and leave the training with a knowledge of the history and theory of interpreter education assessment. Participants receive new ideas and tools for practical application of this knowledge in their IEPs.

This year's sessions have been scheduled at the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville, Fla.; Baker College in Flint, Mich.; and the University of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz.



Attendees of Educator Empowerment Series course at the University of North Florida.

April 29 through May 1, the Innovation Showcase for the SVRS Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Program Award was held on the St. Catherine University campus. St. Catherine University was the 2015 award winner.

To learn more about nominating your IEP for this award, visit <http://www.vrsii.com/programs/iep>. Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 award.

Social Media und Gebärdensprachdolmetschen

By Holly Nelson, VRSII program director



Holly Nelson

Earlier this spring, I took a little time away from the VRSII to travel to Austria with a group of students and faculty from the University of North Florida (UNF). I was asked to facilitate a session for interpreting students from UNF and students in Linz, Austria who attend an academic organization called

GEbärdenSprachDOlmetschen (GESDO), which, translated from German, means sign language interpreting. The session specifically addressed the many ethical concerns related to social media and interpreting. Sound familiar? The use of social media is a hot topic in many fields, including the field of ASL/English interpreting.

Both GESDO and UNF students were active in the discussions and were eager to learn best practices as they prepare to embark on their careers as interpreters. Below is information from some of the discussions held during the session:

1. Was ist social media? (What is social media?) Social media isn't limited to Facebook and Twitter! Anything that allows us to share content with others online can be included in the category: Google+, LinkedIn, blogs, SnapChat, Flickr, Vimeo, Instagram, Pinterest, SlideShare, Yelp, etc. It can be hard to keep up with all of the social media out there! The important thing to consider when using social media is that every time we upload or post in these platforms, people receive additional insight into who we are personally and professionally. Every single GESDO and UNF student identified at least one form of social media with which they are

actively engaged on a daily basis ...and several identified five or MORE!

2. Was ist die Verbindung zu unserm Karriere?
(What is the career connection?)

Social media is one of the most effective ways of connecting with professional networks, marketing yourself, staying abreast of professional issues, etc. The downside of social media is that many employers admit they review applicants' Facebook pages or Twitter accounts during the selection and hiring process to acquire more information about an applicant than what is available in the applicant's resume. Some academic programs use this method as well. Beyond applying for academic or employment opportunities, your social media networks often overlap with your professional networks. A potential community consumer may have access to your profile directly or through common friends and connections. When posting on social media, put yourself in the shoes of an employer, a teacher, a team or a consumer and consider what they might learn from your online content. (GESDO and UNF students were all able to identify individuals in their social media contacts that were also potential consumers, teams or employers.)

3. Was kann schief gehen? (What can go wrong?)

Have you seen social media go wrong? Many of us have witnessed the negative outcomes of social media mistakes either first hand or in the media. People lose jobs, prestige and respect as a result of social media content or posts. Our attitudes, opinions, beliefs and biases can be broadcast to the entire world with the click of a few keystrokes. Even if we have a change of heart and delete a post, there is no guarantee that it is gone ... a screen shot can permanently capture a social media gaffe.

GESDO and UNF students discussed and reflected on the following assumptions of rights: 1) I have freedom of speech; 2) I can post what I want on my personal time; 3) I have a right to self-expression; and 4) My posts are private. These "rights" don't always align with the rights of others we work with on a daily basis. It is important to consider how we

reconcile this conflict.

4. Ethik und social media? (Ethics and social media?)

Examples of Codes of Ethics that address the types of issues that could arise with interpreters using social media can be found in both the United States and Austria. GESDO and UNF students worked side-by-side to discuss and compare the codes. From the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct, the primary focus is on the Principles of Confidentiality, Conduct and Respect for Consumers. From the Berufs- und Ehrenordnung, the focus was on Articles 5-7, Impartiality, Discretion and Respect. Each of the principles students discussed related to the types of activities that occur on social media and how the principles could be internalized and applied as a guide to making better decisions on social media.

5. Was können wir jetzt machen? (What can we do now?)

Consider who is in your social media network: friends, family, coworkers, community members, etc. Understanding exactly who sees your post may help you decide what you share. Do you understand privacy settings? Do you have a personal/professional social media policy? A simple social media policy might answer the following questions: 1. Is it true? 2. Is it kind? 3. Is it necessary? (These are the policies my daughter reflects on before posting). And policies can be much more complex. You may want to decide ahead of time whether you will engage in controversial discussions. How about political discussions? Closely-held beliefs? Think about developing a social media policy that reflects your values and allows for both personal and professional expression in the public sphere. If this idea is appealing, you can find many examples of social media policies online. A simple Google search provided 357 million results! More than enough to provide some inspiration.

The final workshop take away was this: Warte und überlege, bevor du etwas postest! (Pause before you post!)

The next time you upload or post to social media,

take a moment to consider the possible implications. Social media can be a powerful tool to promote you as a professional, make meaningful contacts with community members, join like-minded groups, network with peers or learn about world events. But it can also be destructive to relationships and careers. Post wisely!



VRSII Faculty in Action

As usual, the faculty at VRSII are working hard and accomplishing great things. Here are some of the projects on which they have been working.

Teddi vonPingel was invited to present to the Nevada Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (NVRID) chapter. The name of her presentation was



Teddi von Pingel

“The Demand Control Schema: A Tool for Increasing Personal and Professional Success.” Her presentation was comprised of information about the Demand-

Control Schema (DC-S, *Dean & Pollard, 2001*). NVRID hosted the event on the College of Southern Nevada campus and used satellite to broadcast to Elko and Carson City locations. The goal of the workshop was to provide resources and tools for the interpreters to use when

discussing interpreting work before, during and after assignments.

vonPingel’s presentation provided the background of the DC-S, then participants applied the DC-S to scenarios and characters from the *Harry Potter* films. vonPingel utilized the modern film to provide a common and non-threatening starting place for discussing the demands and controls that arise during interpreting work. Small groups practiced identifying demands and controls that could be implemented in an interpreting situation at Hogwarts, the school Harry Potter attends. Participants were encouraged to discuss their own experiences while maintaining confidentiality. Much of the work focused on sharing different controls that could have been used when reflecting on past work, in order to build possibilities for future assignments. vonPingel is also a recent graduate of the VRSII/UNF master’s program in ASL/English Interpreting with a concentration in pedagogy.

Attaining certified deaf interpreter status had always been a goal for **Samond Bishara**. After learning that the Registry of Interpreters for the



Samond Bishara

Deaf (RID) would suspend new certifications, Bishara began actively pursuing his goal last summer. Bishara passed the written portion of the exam in October 2015, making him eligible for the performance test which he took and passed in December 2015, immediately before the RID suspension went into effect.

Bishara says he is excited about being able to work in the VRS environment. He explains the state of Utah is extremely strict regarding interpreting certification. Historically, he hasn’t been able to help deaf callers who needed a CDI. “It’s incredibly worthwhile and satisfying to see a deaf person get that assistance on a call,” he says.

In 2013, Bishara also received his master's degree in ASL/ English Interpreting with an emphasis in pedagogy through the VRSII's partnership with the University of North Florida. He was a member of the first cohort of the distance-learning master's program. Bishara says, "Obtaining my master's degree helped me understand more about quality curriculum development, pedagogy and gave me a bigger picture of instruction, rather than having a single view. It helped me understand the bigger picture."

He says, "There is a huge need for CDIs within the Deaf community. If you enjoy that kind of work, please pursue it – not just for financial reasons, but for your own enjoyment as well."



Annette Miner
Gallaudet University.

VRSII faculty member **Annette Miner** was invited by Critical Link International to present June 26, 2016, at the Critical Link 8 conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Critical Link 8 conference draws sign language interpreters from across Europe. Miner's presentation was based on situated learning, her dissertation at

Miner says she has always been interested in situated learning, but never realized all the different connections to interpreting, including how to replicate for second-language learners what CODAs receive from birth and the theoretical basis of how personal experiences meld and develop to make a person who they are.

Miner says that situated learning is one part of the larger subject of experiential learning. Her studies are based on the teachings of Pierre Bourdieu, a philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist and public intellectual. Much of his work in experiential learning discussed how experiences impact people in ways they don't realize, shaping them to become who they are. While this seems obvious, Miner says

the theory has become very clear to her when considering the CODA experience and interpreting. "We shouldn't just be interpreting using video for learning feedback," she says. "Interpreting situations should be made as real as possible – this is what CODAs experience from a very young age – a real situation that gives them intuition to handle each situation in which they find themselves." Many IEPs feel they are providing this training, but may be missing one of the four important aspects of training: 1.) Real social interaction with real people in real settings; 2.) Real context; 3.) Real tools, i.e. strong knowledge of written English and sign language; 4.) Real activity, i.e. interpreting.

Recognizing that many educators may feel they have insufficient time to incorporate this training into their programs, Miner says, "Once you build it into your program, it's easier because you can use the same methods repeatedly. You don't have to recreate it every time."

Miner's presentation has been submitted to CIT to present at the October 2016 conference.

Congratulations to VRSII mentor, **Anita Nelson-Julander**, who was accepted to the master's program offered through the University of North Florida and the VRSII.



Anita Nelson-Julander

In addition to her knowledge of the outstanding faculty of the UNF/VRSII master's program, Nelson-Julander says she was drawn to the program because of the research and learning, specific to the field of interpreting. "For my bachelor's degree in integrated studies, I chose three degree areas and combined them to form a unique theory that related to the field of interpreter mentoring. I am looking forward to digging deeper into material specific to interpreting in my master's degree studies," she says. Nelson-Julander says she hopes her work in the master's program will

increase her value as a member of the VRSII faculty. "I hope that it helps me to better serve the interpreters, educators and mentors that we aim to support in our field."

Nelson-Julander began working at the VRSII in 2010, originally in the STW Program, but now has many roles within the VRSII as an interpreter mentor. "I enjoy the myriad of projects and tasks with which I get to be involved. The VRSII has an amazing team, and even though I am a part-time faculty member, my ideas and thoughts are valued. I never feel I am less than a valuable contributing member of the team," she says. Nelson-Julander says she hopes to be part of this outstanding faculty for a long time. "I hope this master's degree will help me contribute even more to the team and opens new and exciting doors I can't anticipate yet!" she says.



On May 14, 2016, Carolyn **Ball** accepted the honor of being the convocation speaker for the College of Education on the beautiful campus at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). EKU is one of the premier IEPs in the United States.

According to its website, "The Department of American Sign Language and Interpreter Education (ASLIE) strives to promote equality and respect of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing people and their diverse communities. We are united towards this goal as a diverse learning and teaching community comprised of a balance of both Deaf and hearing faculty and staff. We welcome students to join us on this journey!"

To learn more about this outstanding IEP, click [here](#).

To see Dr. Ball's address, click [here](#). Her comments begin at 36:31.

Ball also recently contributed a chapter in the *The SAGE Deaf Studies Encyclopedia*. Sage Publications writes of the publication: "The time has come for a new in-depth encyclopedic collection of articles defining the current state of Deaf Studies at an international level and using the critical and intersectional lens encompassing the field. The emergence of Deaf Studies programs at colleges and universities and the broadened knowledge of social sciences... have served to expand the activities of research, teaching, analysis, and curriculum development. The field has been further influenced by the Deaf community's movement, resistance, activism and politics worldwide, as well as the impact of technological advances, such as in communications, with cell phones, computers, and other devices. A major goal of this new encyclopedia is to shift focus away from the "Medical/Pathological Model" that would view Deaf individuals as needing to be "fixed" in order to correct hearing and speaking deficiencies for the sole purpose of assimilating into mainstream society. By contrast, The Deaf Studies Encyclopedia seeks to carve out a new and critical perspective on Deaf Studies with the focus that the Deaf are not a people with a disability to be treated and "cured" medically, but rather, are members of a distinct cultural group with a distinct and vibrant community and way of being."

To see more, click [here](#).

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Where are they Now?

The VRSII's School-to-Work Program (STW) graduates never cease to amaze us. Many, after leaving our program, have gone into the community and started their own mentoring programs or interpreting service businesses, or have worked in schools and networked to provide outstanding interpreting services for the Deaf community. Here is one example of a STW student making changes in her community.

Christine Hitchcock, a VRSII STW graduate, now serves as a board member for the DeafBlind Camp of Maryland, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that serves deaf-blind adults.

Each June, the DeafBlind Camp of Maryland hosts a barrier-free, accessible week, which is operated entirely by donations and volunteer support. The camp accepts up to 40 campers, and each participant is assisted by two service providers/interpreters.

individuals and meet old friends and new friends. The camp offers support groups, cooking classes, Braille lessons, spa days, field trips and old-fashioned camping fun like canoeing, rock wall climbing, swimming, hiking and more.



Hitchcock seated third from right.

Hitchcock is a graduate of the third STW cohort. Great work Christine!



STW graduates from Hitchcock's cohort say an emotional "goodbye" in 2012. Hitchcock is seated fourth from the right.

The majority of campers are from the U.S., but the camp has drawn participants from as far away as Canada and Australia. Hitchcock says campers are a diverse crowd. Some hold several degrees, work and are extremely active in their communities, while for others, this is their only access to communication during the year. For many, the camp represents the only time during the year that they will be able to socialize with other DeafBlind

Check back to learn
the winner of the
2017 Excellence and
Innovation in
Interpreter Education
Award!