

March 2013 Issue



Dr. Carolyn Ball,
Executive Director

Director's Message

The VRSII: Filling a Need

The mission of the VRSII is to empower interpreters and educators. Offering the Interpreter Educator symposiums is one of the many ways the VRSII fulfills its mission.

At the VRSII, we continually work with top-level industry trainers and educators in colleges and universities to determine the areas in which interpreter educators would benefit from additional training. In early 2013, to gather feedback on needed training, VRSII faculty and our partners created and issued a survey that was sent to interpreter educators nationwide.

Survey results highlighted interpreter educators' need for formal training in a variety of topics in their own curriculum. One such topic was Critical Thinking (CT). Survey results revealed that 100 percent of educators included CT in their curriculum even though only 80 percent of educators who responded to the survey had formal training in CT.

The book "Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools and Techniques to Help Students Question their Assumptions," by Stephen Brookfield, was chosen as the foundation for symposium teaching by Dr. Marty Taylor, Dr. Carol Patrie and Sharon Neumann Solow. A copy was sent to each participant prior to the symposium.

Often, interpreter educators are isolated. VRSII symposiums provide an environment that encourages participant collaboration, networking, brainstorming and idea sharing.

At the CT symposium, educators turned theory into reality by working in small groups developing CT curriculum plans that they then presented to all symposium participants on the final day of the

symposium. These presentations were saved and distributed to all symposium participants so educators could immediately begin implementing CT into their courses.

The VRSII is honored to have provided this training to hard-working interpreter educators. The energy in the room as educators networked, collaborated and developed immediate curriculum was a testament to the significance of our mission. Look for more symposiums and incredible topics offered in the future at the VRSII!

VRSII Interpreter Educators Symposium Held in Salt Lake City

More than 75 interpreter educators from colleges and universities across the U.S. attended the third VRSII Interpreter Educators symposium, held March 8 through 10, in Salt Lake City at the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



Interpreter educators attend lectures on the first day of the VRSII's Critical Thinking symposium.

The symposium focused on learning and teaching critical thinking (CT) skills related to interpreting and the interpreting profession to enhance educators' and students' abilities. Symposium content addressed teaching CT at basic, intermediate and advanced protocol levels and modeling and integrating critical thinking across the curriculum.



Interpreter educators and School-to-Work Program students and faculty listen to presenters.

During the two-and-a-half-day seminar, instructors Sharon Neumann Solow, Dr. Carol Patrie and Dr. Marty Taylor lectured about the distinctions between assumptions and beliefs related to CT. Class participants discussed assumptions they believe are commonly held by hearing and deaf individuals about interpreters and the interpreting profession as well as assumptions they believe interpreting students hold about themselves and the interpreting field.



Symposium instructors, bottom row - l to r, Dr. Carol Patrie, Dr. Marty Taylor and Sharon Neumann Solow

Symposium trainer Marty Taylor said, "If our lives don't include critical thinking, then we begin to put up barricades that keep us from succeeding."

Julie Armstrong, a class participant from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and Dave Coyne, from Cincinnati State Technical College, said the symposium had exceeded their expectations. "Interpreter educators are often isolated. The opportunity to meet other interpreter educators from across the country and get different perspectives is invaluable," said Armstrong. Coyne said, "We live and work in neighboring areas, but

have never met. The collaboration at the symposium has been wonderful."

Michelle Monahan, from Phoenix College, agreed that networking is a symposium highlight. "It's so interesting to see all the different backgrounds from around the country," she said.

Class participant Karen Ponah said she was interested in attending the symposium because she has studied CT in the past and feels it is an important issue. Her sister, who is also an interpreter educator and who is deaf, contributed to a book regarding CT for Eastern Kentucky University. "When I heard about the symposium, I thought I would jump right in," she says.



Some of the 2013 Winter School-to-Work Program class members

The VRSII's winter 2013 School-to-Work (STW) program students assisted with the seminar, providing interpreting services and support.

The VRSII symposiums provide a rich opportunity for STW students to use their interpreting skills in a real-life environment and mingle with interpreter educators.

Paul Harrelson, a participant from Gallaudet University, said the biggest surprise for him has been the level of care given to the symposium subject and the quality of instruction. "The trainers at this symposium are top-level leaders in our industry. The ability to think about one topic for an extended period like this is unusual. Normally the focus at symposiums changes every 90 minutes."

The VRSII will offer its second 2013 symposium in October. To learn more, visit www.vrsii.com in early August. The VRSII also acknowledges and thanks the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for its support and accommodation of the VRSII symposiums.