



October 2014 Issue



Director's Message

This year, the Conference of Interpreter Trainers' (CIT) 20th biannual convention will be held in Portland, Ore. The theme of the conference will celebrate the 35th anniversary of the establishment of CIT. CIT was established in 1979 and is the only interpreter education

organization in the United States. The purpose of the organization is to provide research and support for sign language interpreter educators throughout the world. An example of the support provided by CIT today is the publication of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education (IJIE)*, which provides excellent research for interpreters and interpreter educators.

To me, CIT is a very important organization. I served on the CIT board from 1998 through 2010. During that time, I was privileged to meet and mingle with many of the CIT founders – pioneers of interpreting and interpreter education. Mingling with these trailblazers was and continues to be a highlight and passion in my life. This passion grew from a desire to document the history of interpreters and interpreter education. As a result, I began to interview many of the veterans in the field of interpreting and interpreter education. The interviews impacted my life. I learned about the passion, love, frustration and devotion that these pioneers had for the field of interpreting and interpreter education, and it has been inspiring.

It is vital for all interpreters and interpreter educators to reflect on their interpreting roots and to remember those people who paved the way for today's interpreters to achieve their goals in the field of interpreting and interpreter education. When we understand our roots, we can then appreciate and honor those individuals who led the way for us. We can incorporate those founders' hard work in our future efforts and the future of the field of interpreting.

If the pioneers are forgotten, their past efforts and accomplishments, from which we can learn, will soon be lost. As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of CIT, I encourage interpreters to locate one of the trailblazers of interpreting and interpreter education in your area. Interview that person, record the interview and share the wisdom of this pioneer with everyone in the field around you. I promise that honoring these pioneers and the work they have done to pave the way for interpreters today will impact your life forever, as it has mine.

**Come see us at the
CIT Conference in October!**

The VRS Interpreting Institute is pleased to be the top sponsor of the 2014 CIT conference.

Visit our booth to meet faculty and learn about VRSII programs.

We'll see you there!



San Antonio College Interpreter Education Program Wins the SVRS Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award

Congratulations to the interpreting education program (IEP) at San Antonio College (SAC), winner of the 2014 SVRS Excellence and Innovation in Interpreter Education Award. The award recognizes one outstanding IEP each year that exceeds regular (or customary) educational standards, leverages technology in its program and incorporates interaction with the Deaf community in its interpreter education programming. All two- and four-year degree-granting IEPs in the United States and Canada are eligible to win.

As the winning IEP, SAC will receive \$8,000 to be reinvested in the program as well as \$2,000 to be used for training materials (i.e. books, software, etc.) In October, two faculty members will receive airfare and paid registration to the Conference of Interpreter Trainers convention where they will be given the award.

SAC's student body typically contains 30 to 50 deaf students, so every class and event is interpreted. This provides IEP students, with a certified interpreter, the opportunity to interpret in classrooms as well as at a range of special events – from on-stage productions to panels.

Because the city of San Antonio no longer offers case management for the deaf, SAC has created a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center where deaf and hard-of-hearing people can come for assistance. Students often gather in the center and communicate with Deaf community members as well as volunteer their time giving service. Lauri Metcalf, chairperson of the interpreting department says this interaction creates a "rich" experience for all involved. "Students get lonely being far from home. They enjoy connecting with people in the Deaf community."



Lauri Metcalf

SAC has invested many resources in its program and has dedicated classrooms specifically for the program, individual interpreting stations, computer classrooms, two open labs and a collaborative-learning classroom where students can gather with deaf students to practice their skills.

Tom Cox, a professor in the program says SAC faculty and staff work hard to create a "family" environment, making students feel welcome and supported. Students' high level of dedication to their education is the result. Cox says students often voluntarily retake classes in which they have received a passing grade in order to hone their skills.



Tom Cox

He says, "We're proud that the IEP at SAC is one of only 13 accredited IEPs in the country and one of only four associate degree programs." SAC IEP students must pass the challenging Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Board for Evaluation of Interpreters certification test before they can graduate. Illinois, Michigan and Missouri are now using Texas' certification system. SAC offers mentoring and tutoring to assist students in passing the test, including an all-day workshop where faculty donate their time.

"Getting enough interpreters into the Deaf community is crucial," says Cox. "That task falls to the IEPs."

New Educator Empowerment Series Classes Coming Soon!

Don't miss your opportunity to attend the popular Educator Empowerment Series classes. The 2015 schedule will be available soon. Look for the new schedule in late 2014 at www.vrsii.com/programs.

Where are They Now?

In June 2010, the VRSII began its School-to-Work (STW) Program with a cohort of 15 interns. With the graduation of the VRSII's eighth cohort in August 2014, the VRSII has now graduated more than 100 interns. Where are those STW graduates now, and what have they been doing?

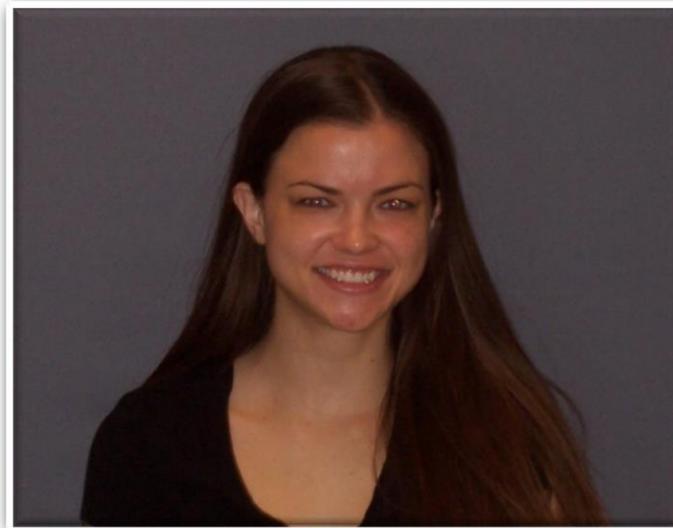
The VRSII caught up with one of its first graduates, Elizabeth, to find out where her career path has taken her and, in retrospect, her thoughts about the training she received at the VRSII.

Since graduation, Elizabeth has interpreted in an educational environment (K through 12) as well as in Video Relay Service (VRS) and in various freelance situations. She says attending the STW Program helped build her confidence as an interpreter. Says Elizabeth: "My experience at the VRSII taught me to venture outside my comfort zone, and that it's alright to make mistakes. That knowledge really helped and continues to help me grow in every aspect of my interpreting."

Elizabeth says one extremely valuable skill she learned at the VRSII was to "go with the flow." She says, "Interpreting in any setting is filled with many unknowns and uncontrolled variables. As interpreters, we need to handle each challenge with good judgment and always keep our clients in mind."

Elizabeth remembers one of the key points of learning from the VRSII was "meaning-based" interpreting, i.e. maintaining the authenticity of the message rather than focusing on word-for-word translation. Interns also explored American Sign Language and English as individual languages, outside the realm of interpreting – study which she thinks is often overlooked and which she now takes into consideration in her daily work.

When asked if, in retrospect, she would attend the VRSII again, she enthusiastically responds, "Absolutely! The VRSII helped accelerate my career in ways that never would have been possible without the training I received. Not only did I gain valuable knowledge and experience, I made amazing friends and professional contacts who have been equally crucial in my development as an interpreter."



First School-to-Work Program Cohort Member - Elizabeth

Elizabeth advises new IEP graduates to have a great attitude in everything they do and with everyone they meet. "Skills and experience are certainly important, but having a good attitude and respect for colleagues, clients and mentors will get you far," she says.

Reflecting on a Collaborative Opportunity for Interpreter Educators: Embedding Ethics

By Holly Nelson



Teaching ASL/English interpreting ethics happens in a variety of ways in programs around the country. Ethics instruction can take shape in stand-alone courses, a series of courses or be embedded in

other courses not specifically reserved for ethics. Regardless of how ethics instruction is occurring in any given program, taking time to reflect on instructional approaches can be a helpful exercise to ensure relevancy and effectiveness.

This past September, the VRSII brought together educators and mentors from around the country to spend a weekend thinking more deeply about how ethics instruction can be intentionally embedded into ASL/English interpreter education. The Educator Empowerment Series course, *Embedding Ethics into Interpreting Curriculum*, which I taught, provided participants the time and space to focus on this important element of professional education and preparation.

The exploration of select foundational decision-making and ethical-development theorists and models included discussion of Lawrence Kohlberg's *Stages of Moral Development* (1984), Rushworth Kidder's *Ethical Checkpoints and Right vs. Right Paradigms* (1995) and James Rest's *Four Component Model of Moral Development* (1994). In addition to these seminal works, ethics instruction was explored from the narrowed perspective of ASL/English interpreting. Specific considerations included the possible resources available to educators as they determine what to include, or

what can guide ethics instruction, outcomes and student-learning objectives. Ethics objectives and instruction can be considered and developed utilizing the following resources:

- Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Educational Standards (CCIE)
- The Entry-to-Practice Competencies and
- The NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification requirements

The educational standards from CCIE provide a framework for what IEPs need to address, how knowledge and skills competencies are framed within broader standards for programs and highlight the need for ethics instruction. The 2014 Educational Standards can be found online at: [http://ccie-accreditation.org/PDF/CCIE Accreditation Standards 2014.pdf](http://ccie-accreditation.org/PDF/CCIE_Accreditation_Standards_2014.pdf)

The Entry-to-Practice Competencies provide competency-based standards that can be used to develop program and course objectives aimed at preparing students to become competent and capable practitioners. The Entry-to-Practice Competencies can be found online at: [http://www.unco.edu/doit/resources/Publication PDFs/Competencies brochure handout.pdf](http://www.unco.edu/doit/resources/Publication_PDFs/Competencies_brochure_handout.pdf)

Additionally, reflecting on the National Association of the Deaf-Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf National Interpreter Certification's *Tasks and Knowledge and Skills Statements* can provide insight on the specific criteria students will be expected to meet upon seeking national certification. The Tasks and Knowledge and Skills Statements can be found in Appendix C of the NIC Candidate Handbook, found online at: [http://rid.org/userfiles/File/pdfs/Certification Documents/NICCandidateHBMay2014_1.pdf](http://rid.org/userfiles/File/pdfs/Certification_Documents/NICCandidateHBMay2014_1.pdf)

Sixteen participants attended the weekend session. Most were long-time educators, already teaching ethics. Others included a handful of educators, mentors, program coordinators or graduate students hoping to one day teach or incorporate ethics into their mentoring or programs.

During the weekend, participants worked together to develop curricular materials to take home and implement in their practices. Their work incorporated sound principles of objective-based learning, alignment, sequencing and measurement. The result? Creative and innovative resources! The components developed addressed the following topics:

- How to address biases with students in the classroom
- How to incorporate professional development plans related to personal and professional ethics into teaching and mentoring
- Facilitating learners in developing a personal code of conduct
- Options implementing ethics into short-term trainings

Educators cannot do what we do alone. Taking advantage of opportunities to network and collaborate with colleagues can bring new insights and perspective to our practice. As 2014 comes to a close and we look ahead to 2015, may each of you find ways to reflect on your teaching and find opportunities to learn from, and share with, other educators.

References:

Kidder, R. M. (1995). *How good people make tough choices: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living*. New York: Harper.

Kohlberg, L. A. (1984). *The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages* (Vol. 2). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Rest, J. R. (1994). Background: Theory and research. In J. R. Rest & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral development in the professions: Psychology and applied ethics* (pp. 1–25). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

VRSII School-to-Work Interns Chosen as CIT Student Representatives

Congratulations to three recent graduates of the VRSII's School-to-Work Program for being chosen to be student representatives at the Conference of Interpreter Trainer's (CIT) convention. The convention will be held this month in Portland, Ore. The CIT student representatives, who graduated from the VRSII's program in August, are Kellie, Katie and Cheryl. These women represent one fourth of the 2014 summer School-to-Work Program cohort.



Kellie



Katie



Cheryl

Apply Now for the 2015 School-to-Work Program Summer Session

Applications are now being accepted for the next session of the VRSII's School-to-Work (STW) Program, which will begin June 4, 2015. Applications are due by Feb. 13, 2015. The STW Program helps interpreter education program graduates bridge the gap from graduation to work readiness. To learn more, visit www.vrsii.com/stwlearnmore.