interpretations

a newsletter for Arizona's educational interpreters

Spring 2004

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Tom Horne
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Arizona
Department of Education

Seen Any Good Movies Lately?

Open-Captioned Films Ease Strain of Interpreting Technical Topics

By Marie Blankenship

Marie Blankenship, Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind educational interpreter assigned to a high school through the Desert Valleys Regional Coop, rushed to the next class with her student. She rifled through her bag for her sign notes on chemistry, a difficult subject under the best of circumstances. Her chest tightened at the thought of trying to keep up with the technical information. *What's this*? she wondered as she looked up. A movie today? And it's captioned! She exhaled deeply and relaxed. *Sure am glad I told the teacher about the Captioned Media Program.*

This teacher, as well as a number of her student's other teachers, has learned how easy it is to browse through the list of captioned titles, select, and order online. To his surprise, he received his first order in only two days when he expected delivery in a week or so.

Although interpreters have this wonderful resource available, Marie wonders whether it's under-utilized. Open-captioned films through the Captioned Media Program (CMP) has saved her many hours of difficult, technical interpreting by allowing the student direct access to the information. However, she looks back ruefully on the years she knew of the existence of CMP without fully appreciating its great benefits and ease of use, all at no charge. Today, she considers it fortunate that her ongoing interpreter training kept bringing the service to her attention.

The day that turned the tide for Marie was when she learned that this chemistry teacher planned to show a videotape series on the subject of chemistry. "Are they closed captioned?" she asked him. Although Marie had mentioned the program at the beginning of the year, the teacher lost the information in the busyness of getting his classes up and running.

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Please pass this on to your educational interpreter!

Qualifications for Educational Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired

In January, the Arizona State Board of Education held a public hearing on the Exceptional Student Service rules regarding Braille literacy and educational interpreters. Several issues were raised, primarily surrounding the education qualifications for educational interpreters, which would be viewed as a substantive change and further delay enactment of the standards. The overwhelming response of interested parties supported the Board's desire to move the rules package forward in its present form to establish a baseline. The Board expects to reconvene a working group of school/district representatives, educational interpreters and parents of hearing impaired children to discuss future proposed modifications.

The Board submitted the rules package in January to the Attorney General's (AG) office for review. The AG is allowed 60 days to respond to the request for approval. Once the rules are approved, they are filed with the Secretary of State and take effect 60 days from that date. If all goes well, these rules should be in effect the beginning of June 2004.

Please direct questions to Christy Farley at Cfarley@ade.az.gov.

Check it Out!

Deaf Culture and Hearing Loss Resource Library

The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) welcomes the public to use its resource library. It features collections of books, videotapes and CD-ROMSs on a wide range of topics of interest to the deaf and hard of hearing as well as parents, interpreters and other professionals. RID CEU credits are available for CD-ROM workshops from Signs of Development. A processing fee applies for those who live in Phoenix Metro. This fee is waived for those outside the area.

Borrowers can check out two items (three for a pre-established list of materials) for up to two weeks, and renew by notifying the library. To sign up for library privileges, simply fill out the form and provide two types of identification. This can be done in person or by contacting Deb Stone.

The library is located at the ACDHH office, 1400 W. Washington Street, #126, in Phoenix. The hours are 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday through Friday. Those outside Metro Phoenix can request mail delivery of materials. A complete listing of resources available at the library is online at http://www.acdhh.org/library.asp.

For more information on RID education credits, contact Rob Voreck, ACDHH Licensing & Certification Coordinator at 602.542.3286 V/TTY or rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us.

Please direct other questions or requests for additional information to Deb Stone at 602.542.3358 TTY. Outside Phoenix Metro, call 1.800.352.8161 V/TTY or email: deb.stone@acdhh.state.az.us.

Do you want your own copy of interpretations?

Contact Cande Barfuss at mbarfus@ade.az.gov.

To-do List For Educational Interpreters

By Sandra L. Gray

It's never too early to begin planning for the future. The following suggestions may help start next year off better than ever.

- ✓ Before the school year begins, or shortly thereafter, conduct an interpreting/deaf awareness workshop to acquaint teachers and school staff with what interpreters do. Distribute sign alphabet and number worksheets, roles and responsibilities information, etc. Make it fun! Teachers are busy with many mundane details at this time of year. A treat and certificates of attendance are a nice touch.
- ✓ Obtain student IEPs, and become familiar with educational background and interpreting needs.
- ✓ Introduce yourself to: the principal, assistant principal, teachers, paraprofessionals, front desk personnel, technology staff, coaches, librarian, and maintenance, security, cafeteria, and library staff. Be the first to say hello. Maybe even teach them a few signs relevant to their jobs!
- ✓ Obtain copies of course textbooks.
- ✓ Try to obtain all necessary identifications before school begins. Some schools require a parking permit on your vehicle and a photo I.D. This is where meeting the front desk personnel comes in handy. Frequently, interpreters are not district employees, so don't expect to be on anyone's list. They don't know who you are unless you tell them.
- ✓ Obtain a classroom and restroom key.
- ✓ Introduce yourself to parents and invite them to your workshop.
- ✓ Thank teachers for their cooperation.
- ✓ Request a mailbox so you receive school announcements, etc.
- ✓ Get to know the students you will be working with. Remember, interpreters do not just interpret for the student who is deaf but for everyone in the classroom.
- ✓ Prepare for the IEP meeting: interpreter coverage, accessibility information, observations, etc.
- ✓ Prepare a folder for the occasions you will need a substitute. Include all pertinent information including: a map of the school campus, phone numbers, staff names, classroom numbers, and a daily schedule. (I make it a goal to have this done by Labor Day.)
- ✓ Set up an email account.

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- ✓ If you have a worksheet explaining the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, interpreter, and students, make sure students who are deaf have two copies: one for their folder at school and one to take home for their parents.
- ✓ Keep a candy dish filled.
- ✓ Organize a sign language club.
- ✓ Allow for prep time.
- ✓ If there is a teacher of the deaf (TOD) in your school, be sure to communicate regularly and determine his or her interpreting needs. Some TODs would have you interpret while others prefer a one-on-one setting with deaf students.
- ✓ Stretching and breathing exercises help to reduce injury, anxiety, and stress.
- ✓ Make sure your appearance is professional without compromising comfort.
- ✓ Eat lunch!
- ✓ Support and cooperate with other interpreters.
- ✓ Be an accessibility expert.
- ✓ Encourage Sign language learners. Say things like "nice job" or "good Sign language."
- ✓ Be on time.
- ✓ Plan ahead for assemblies, plays and graduations.
- ✓ Laugh at yourself. Have fun learning.
- ✓ Have deaf students sign names. (Lead Interpreter Kitty Lehman suggests having deaf students take pictures of peers and sign their names. The pictures make excellent flash cards for interpreters.)

Sandra L. Gray is the educational interpreter for the ASDB Southeast Regional Cooperative.

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats

Learning to Drive…Toward Certification

Schatzi Taylor has been a certified interpreter "for ages." Over the years she has observed that many qualified interpreters practicing in the field do not complete the certification process for a variety of reasons: 1) stage fright, 2) feeling unprepared and 3) intimidation by RID certified interpreters. Whatever the reason an individual has for not seeking certification, Schatzi offers the following advice.

One interpreter should not compare herself to another, especially an old hand in the field. Just as in any other endeavor, the experienced interpreter has developed strategies over time to deal with the annoyances, frustrations and complexities involved in any interpreting assignment. On the other hand, an interpreter who has just received her certification can expect to make a number of mistakes. As she learns and progresses, gaining experience, those mistakes will come less frequently.

Consider the analogy of learning to drive a car (and for this Schatzi thanks Annette Long, a practitioner with a half century of experience). An Arizona teenager can get a driving permit when he is 15 years and 7 months of age. By that time, he has a history of "backseat driving" (much to his parents' annoyance), has probably taken classroom driver's education, and knows many rules of the road. But his inexperience doesn't allow for full competence at navigating all road hazards. He must rely on advice from the supervising adult in the passenger seat. As he practices he gains many of the needed skills. At the 16-year-old mark, he is eligible to test for a driver's license. Upon passing this test, he is legally qualified to drive unsupervised. This does not mean that he is experienced enough to conquer the freeway during rush hour or enter the Indianapolis 500. It does mean that under many or most driving conditions, he should be able to get the car safely from point A to point B.

Now imagine the state interpreting rating systems, the EIPA, and the lower levels of the NAD as the "driver's permit" for interpreters. By the time an interpreter receives one of these ratings/ certifications/POPs (piece of paper), he has done his share of "backseat driving," has taken courses in his craft, and has many resources at his fingertips. At this point, to achieve success he should match the assignment he accepts to his skill level. Or he could stretch himself a little by accepting an assignment at a slightly higher level where he can access the assistance and support of a person with a higher certification and/or more experience. When the interpreter has mastered the majority of situations, it's time for him to go for RID evaluation, the "driver's license" of the interpreting world. Just as a 16-year-old driver would probably not be ready for the Indianapolis 500, the newly certified interpreter should gain more experience before tackling situations such as legal, some mental health, medical, etc.

Don't think that RID certification will automatically mean the end of mistakes. It won't. However, as long as the interpreter learns from his mistakes and takes corrective action, his mistakes can be a learning experience.

Schatzi believes that the uncertified interpreters in the field have more skills than they think. "Please consider having your skill level evidenced by a rating/certificate or POP," she urges.

Schatzi Taylor, MA, CSC ,CI/ CT, is the vocational specialist at phoenix Day School for the Deaf.

National Interpreter Certification Written Exam

Try to contain your excitement. Concrete information about the new National Interpreter Certification (NIC) written exam is now available.

Choose between computer-based testing and pencil-and-paper exams:

Computer-based test

- Offered at over 400 sites nationwide
  - Arizona sites
    - Tucson (2)
    - Flagstaff
    - Phoenix (4)
    - Mesa (2)
    - Glendale (2)
    - Peoria
    - Scottsdale
- Retakes allowed every three months
- Results immediately available
- On-demand test scheduling
- Application deadline four weeks prior to test date
- Member: $225.00; Retake $175.00
- Non-member: $325.00; Retake $275.00

Pencil and Paper Test

- Offered at 50 sites nationwide
  - Arizona Site – ACDHH
- Retakes every 6 months
- Results available 10 business days after receipt of test from site
- Offered 1st Saturday of June and December
- Application deadline 8 weeks prior to test date
- Member: $175.00; Retake $125.00
- Non-Member: $275.00; Retake $225.00

IMPORTANT NOTE: At this time, only the pencil-and-paper test option is offered at no charge to qualified Arizona residents who register with ACDHH. More information about how to register with ACDHH will be released shortly.

Test outline (encompasses entire NIC exam; not just written test):

- Task 1: Assess each interpreting situation to determine if qualified for the assignment
- Task 2: Prepare for assignment by determining logistics and purpose of interaction for all parties involved
- Task 3: Maintain competence in the field of interpreting
- Task 4: Apply the Code of Ethics for the interpreting profession
- Task 5: Provide interpreting services that reflect awareness and sensitivity to culturally and ethnically diverse groups
- Task 6: Facilitate the flow of communication during the interpreting process

- Task 7: Apply the appropriate communicative mode and language register
- Task 8: Construct equivalent discourse in the target language while monitoring message comprehension and feedback to modify interpretation accordingly
- Task 9A: Use ASL proficiently within expressive interpreting tasks, including choice of sign vocabulary, use of sign modification to show variation in meaning and grammatical function, and appropriate use of space, facial expression, and body movement
- Task 9B: Comprehend ASL proficiently during the interpreting task, including sign vocabulary choice and sign modification to show variation in meaning and grammatical functions
- Task 10A: Use English proficiently to construct an equivalent message in the target language, including appropriate vocabulary choice, tone, grammar, and syntax, with appropriate use of register, pausing, rhythm, intonation, pitch, and other suprasegmental features
- Task 10B: Comprehend English proficiently to construct an equivalent message in the target language, including appropriate vocabulary choice, tone, grammar, syntax, appropriate use of register, pausing, rhythm, intonation, pitch, and other suprasegmental features

Applications, test outline, and the long-awaited suggested reading list may be found at http://www.rid.org/nic.html.

Direct any comments, questions, or compliments to rob.voreck@acdhh.state.az.us.

Continued from Page 1

Marie took this opportunity to introduce him to CMP firsthand. She showed him her catalog, and he quickly found what he wanted. Then she demonstrated how simple it was to set up his own account as an educator. He proceeded to order and the rest, as they say, is history. He has been quite satisfied with the whole process. “I think it’s super!” he said. “The media company gets the videos to you very quickly, and to return them you just drop them in the mailbox.”

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Captioned Media Program is made available to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as parents, teachers and other professionals who work with this population. Hundreds of titles are available on a wide variety of topics including a section of films captioned in Spanish. A big help to interpreters is the selection of sign language videos, which include technical signs in various disciplines.

How do you avail yourself of this wonderful, free loan service, you ask? Simple. Order online at www.cfv.org, or phone 800.237.6213 V. Your order will be mailed to you free of charge with a prepaid return-mailing label.

The student Marie works with gives the program a big thumb’s up. “I think it’s cool because it’s easier to watch the captioning than look back and forth from interpreter to movie.”

interpretations is a newsletter...

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Editor in chief:
Joy Marks

Editor/Project Coordinator:
Peggy Levesque

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Martie Shrader

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Contact us
ADE/ESS:
mbarfus@ade.az.gov
602.542.3184 phone
602.542.5404 fax
web site www.ade.az.gov/ess

ASDB:
Joy Marks
jmarks@asdb.state.az.us
602.544.1670 phone
602.544.1704
web site www.asdb.state.az.us

Arizona Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

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