Appendix A: Deaf Interpreter Competencies

Contents

For use as part of this curriculum, the NCIEC Deaf Interpreter Competencies have been adapted from *Toward Effective Practice: Competencies of the Deaf Interpreter* (NCIEC, 2010). These competencies include references to DeafBlind individuals and the DeafBlind community. Brackets [Mx/Ux] next to each competency indicate applicable modules and units. A summary chart further clarifies linkages between specific competencies and modules.

Competencies

The *Deaf Interpreter Competencies* comprise specialized knowledge and skill sets extending beyond those expected of the generalist practitioner, grouped into five domains – 1.0 Foundational, 2.0 Language, Culture and Communication, 3.0 Consumer Assessment, 4.0 Interpreting Practice, and 5.0 Professional Development.

1.0 Foundational Competencies

As a Deaf person, the Deaf interpreter starts with a distinct set of formative experiences described extensively by Deaf interpreter focus group participants (NCIEC, 2009a). The formative experiences of Deaf interpreters include:

1.1   Exposure to American Sign Language and/or another signed language, and a wide variety of other communication forms used by Deaf people through life-long interactions with Deaf and DeafBlind family members and friends, Deaf and DeafBlind peers within the education system, and Deaf and DeafBlind people in the community. [Modules 1, 2]

1.2   Early experiences of interpreting for family, friends, and peers. [Module 1]

1.3   Experiences of personal challenges in comprehending situations, interpreters, and various communication styles. [Module 1]

1.4   Personal experiences of discrimination, oppression, and frustration with lack of access to communication and information. [Modules 1, 3]

2.0 Language, Culture & Communication Competencies

The Deaf interpreter demonstrates the following language, culture, and communication competencies critical to effective interaction with the range of consumers with whom s/he may work:

2.1   Native or native-like competence in ASL, and/or a second signed language, including spontaneous use of pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of ASL, and/or a second signed language discourse including prosody, accent, transition markers, discourse markers, and turn taking. [Module 1]

2.2   Adeptness and flexibility in working across a range of registers, genres, and variations of ASL, and/or a second signed language, attributable to consumer's age, gender, ethnicity and cultural background, region, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive health, and education levels. [Modules 1, 2, 3, 5]

2.3   Ability to recognize and negotiate cultural behaviors, values, mores, and discourse features and styles for effective communication. [Modules 1, 2, 6]

2.4   Creativity and flexibility in the use of alternative visual communication strategies to convey complex concepts to consumers, including drawing, mime, props, etc. [Modules 2, 3, 5, 6]

2.5   Ability to read and write English for sight translation of standard forms and instructions (e.g., hospital admission, informed consent, job applications, insurance, billing) and written translation of the Deaf consumer's responses. [Module 5]

2.6   Ability to effectively explain and discuss the following concepts to a variety of stakeholders in an articulate, professional manner:

2.6.1   Process of consumer assessment and the rationale for using particular interpreting strategies and interventions. [Modules 2, 3]

2.6.2   Roles, functions, and processes of the interpreting team. [Module 6]

2.6.3   Rationale for the decision to use consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. [Module 5]

2.6.4   Extent to which interpreters' linguistic negotiation and consumer language constraints may limit appropriate stakeholder use of portions of the interpretation. [Modules 2, 4, 5]

3.0 Consumer Assessment Competencies

The Deaf interpreter demonstrates the following competencies in determining appropriate interpreting and communication strategies with consumers:

3.1   Recognize educational, cognitive, physiological, and sociolinguistic factors and communication needs likely to influence interpretation strategies and communication interventions. [Modules 3, 6]

3.2   Identify Deaf and DeafBlind consumers' language use (e.g., bilingual, monolingual, semi-lingual, familiarity with language/s being used, communication system interference, international signs, use of culture-specific and idiosyncratic gestures or home signs, use of tactile or close-vision communication) to determine target language/communication form. [Modules 2, 3, 6]

3.3   Identify Deaf and DeafBlind consumers' potential gaps (e.g., informational, experiential, educational, visual, protocol, cognitive, memory, or cultural frame of reference) relative to particular interactions or settings to determine target language/communication strategy, consistent with the experiential and linguistic framework of Deaf or DeafBlind consumers and appropriate to situational protocol. [Modules 3, 5, 6]

3.4   Apply understanding of the history and significance of oppression in the Deaf and the DeafBlind communities in the analysis of power relationships among participants within the interpreted interaction to determine how the position of consumers within the power dynamic might influence interpreting decisions or strategies. [Modules 2, 3, 4]

4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies

The Deaf interpreter demonstrates ability to use engagement, analytic, production, monitoring, and decision-making skills and strategies in the co-construction of meaningful interpretation for all consumers involved:

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4.1 Engaging Deaf and DeafBlind consumers in the interpreting process in order to effect the most accurate and meaningful communication. [Modules 5, 6]

4.2 Elicitation strategies to draw out information and seek clarification of meaning (e.g., prompting, probing, questioning, referencing previous comments, paraphrasing, verifying interpreter's comprehension of the Deaf or DeafBlind consumer's message). [Modules 3, 5, 6]

4.3 Contextual strategies to infer implied meaning and discern meaning in spite of production interference in such areas as sentence structures, pronominal reference, surrogate role, reporting of events, description, use of tense and spatial reference. [Modules 5, 6]

4.4 Strategies to maintain Deaf and DeafBlind consumers' focus on information relevant to the discourse (e.g., reiterating previous remark/question, making connections to earlier discussion; clarifying the point of remark/question). [Modules 3, 5, 6]

4.5 Production strategies aimed at a target language/communication form consistent with the experiential and linguistic framework of Deaf and DeafBlind consumers including:

4.5.1 Adapting syntactic form (e.g., temporal sequencing, spatial representation, temporal referencing, pronominal referencing, constructed action, restructuring of question forms to narrow possible responses, adjusting register). [Modules 3, 5, 6]

4.5.2 Managing flow of information (e.g., pacing, parsing of content). [Module 5, 6]

4.5.3 Providing contextual information (e.g., visual description, linkages among concepts discussed, added redundancy, reframing, analogies, examples, definitions, cultural information, and explanation of situational protocol). [Modules 2, 5, 6]

4.5.4 Monitoring consumer feedback to determine alternative modes of communication and other interventions (e.g., tactile or close-vision communication, international signs, adopting the Deaf or DeafBlind consumer's preferred signs, cultural specific or idiosyncratic gestures, home signs, use of props, drawing, mime, etc.). [Modules 2, 3, 5, 6]

4.5.5 Seeking clarification from all parties involved concerning details as needed to accomplish above. [Modules 5, 6]

4.6 Demonstrate ability to recognize when stakeholders may use ancillary aspects or imprinted messages in ways that do not represent an intended consequence of the linguistic interaction. [Modules 4, 5, 6]

4.7 Demonstrate ability to monitor interaction to determine whether interpreting is effective; determine when it might be appropriate to stop the proceedings and offer appropriate alternative resources. [Modules 4, 5, 6]

4.8 Identify, recognize, and differentiate roles as an interpreter and as an advocate, including boundaries expected within the profession and the Deaf and the DeafBlind communities. [Modules 4, 6]

4.9 When working as a team with hearing interpreter/s, demonstrate the ability to effectively negotiate aspects of the conjoint work with all parties involved:

4.9.1 Foster a collaborative interpreting process, working together to verify meaning, gather clarifying information, manage information flow within the team, and effect a mutual monitoring process in the construction of complete and accurate interpretation for all consumers involved. [Module 6]

4.9.2 Agree in advance with team interpreter on language use, techniques and strategies for routine and complex interpreting situations, and how to adapt and change course as needed. [Module 6]

4.9.3 Agree in advance with team interpreter on the use of consecutive and/or simultaneous interpretation and management of switching between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting as needed. [Module 6]

4.9.4 Discuss in advance with team interpreter how to manage potential communication breakdowns between team members, including requesting for brief team conferences, adapting language use, techniques, strategies, and replacing members of the team, when necessary, in a professional manner. [Module 6]

4.9.5 Recognize and effectively navigate potential power dynamics (e.g., perceived roles, cultural disparities, discrimination, oppression, audism) within the team process. [Module 6]

4.5.6 When two or more teams are at work, plan how and when to switch so that each team will utilize and build upon existing

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linguistic concepts to keep the transition from one team to another linguistically clear to all consumers involved. [Module 6]

5.0 Professional Development Competencies

The Deaf interpreter demonstrates the following competencies aimed at continual development and enhancement of the Deaf interpreter profession:

5.1 Pursue professional development activities that involve interaction with colleagues, peers, and other professionals. [Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

5.2 Actively encourage and participate in professional learning communities of Deaf interpreters (e.g., meetings, workshops, conferences, virtual meeting rooms). [Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

5.3 Keep abreast of current trends in interpretation, linguistics, cultural studies, and research. [Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

5.4 Stay abreast of knowledge and current trends in a wide variety of subject areas (e.g., medical, mental health, and legal) and any area in which the Deaf interpreter may work. [Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

5.5 Pursue educational and interpreting credentials. [Module 1]

References

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. (2010). *Toward Effective Practice: Competencies of the Deaf Interpreter.* Retrieved from http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/DC_Final_Final.pdf

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. (2009a). Analysis of Deaf Interpreter focus group discussions conducted April-July 2007. Retrieved from http://diinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/DI_FocusGroups_FinalReport.pdf

Competencies by Modules

1.0 Foundational Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
1.1 Exposure to American Sign Language and/or another signed language, and a wide variety of other communication forms used by Deaf people through life-long interactions with Deaf family members and friends, Deaf peers within the education system, and Deaf people in the community.	X		X			
1.2 Early experiences of interpreting for family, friends, and peers.	X					
1.3 Experiences of personal challenges in comprehending situations, interpreters, and various communication styles.	X					
1.4 Personal experiences of discrimination, oppression, and frustration with lack of access to communication and information.	X		X			

2.0 Language, Culture & Communication Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
2.1 Native or native-like competency in ASL and/or a second signed language, including spontaneous use of pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of ASL and/or a second signed language discourse including prosody, accent, transition markers, discourse markers, and turn taking.	X					
2.2 Adeptness and flexibility in working across a range of registers, genres, and variations of ASL and/or a second signed language, attributable to consumer's age, gender, ethnicity and cultural background, region, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive health, and education levels.	X	X	X		X	

2.0 Language, Culture & Communication Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
2.3 Ability to recognize and negotiate cultural behaviors, values, mores, and discourse features and styles for effective communication.	X	X				X
2.4 Creativity and flexibility in the use of alternative visual communication strategies to convey complex concepts to consumers, including drawing, mime, props, etc.		X	X		X	X
2.5 Ability to read and write English for sight translation of standard forms and instructions (e.g., hospital admission, informed consent, job applications, insurance, billing) and written translation of the Deaf consumer's responses.					X	
2.6 Ability to effectively explain and discuss the following concepts to a variety of stakeholders in an articulate, professional manner:						
2.6.1 Process of consumer assessment and the rationale for using particular interpreting strategies and interventions.		X	X			
2.6.2 Roles, functions, and processes of the interpreting team.						X
2.6.3 Rationale for the decision to use consecutive or simultaneous interpreting.					X	
2.6.4 Extent to which interpreters' linguistic negotiation and consumer language constraints may limit appropriate stakeholder use of portions of the interpretation.		X		X	X	

3.0 Consumer Assessment Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
3.1 Recognize educational, cognitive, physiological, and sociolinguistic factors and communication needs likely to influence interpretation strategies and communication interventions.			X			X
3.2 Identify Deaf consumers' language use (e.g., bilingual, monolingual, semi-lingual, familiarity with language(s) being used, communication system interference, international signs, use of culture-specific and idiosyncratic gestures or home signs, use of tactual communication, use of close-vision communication) to determine a target language/communication form.		X	X			X
3.3 Identify Deaf consumer's potential gaps (e.g., informational, experiential, educational, visual, protocol, cognitive, memory, cultural, or frame of reference) relative to the particular interaction or setting in order to determine a target language/communication strategy consistent with the experiential and linguistic framework of the Deaf consumer and appropriate to situational protocol.			X		X	X
3.4 Apply understanding of the history and significance of oppression in the Deaf community in analysis of power relationships among participants within the interpreted interaction in order to determine how the consumer's position within the power dynamic might influence interpreting decisions or strategies.		X	X	X		

4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
4.1 Engaging the Deaf consumer in the interpreting process in order to effect the most accurate and meaningful communication.					X	X

4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
4.2 Elicitation strategies to draw out information and seek clarification of meaning (e.g., prompting, probing, questioning, referencing previous comments, paraphrasing, verifying interpreter's comprehension of the Deaf consumer's message).			X		X	X
4.3 Contextual strategies to infer implied meaning and discern meaning in spite of production interference in such areas as sentence structures, pronominal reference, surrogate role, reporting of events, description, use of tense and spatial reference.					X	X
4.4 Strategies to maintain the Deaf consumer's focus on information relevant to the discourse (e.g., reiterating previous remark/question, making connections to earlier discussion; clarifying the point of remark/question).			X		X	X
4.5 Production strategies aimed at a target language/communication form consistent with the experiential and linguistic framework of the Deaf consumer including:						
4.5.1 Adapting syntactic form (e.g., temporal sequencing, spatial representation, temporal referencing, pronominal referencing, constructed action, restructuring of question forms to narrow possible responses, adjusting register).			X		X	X
4.5.2 Managing flow of information (e.g., pacing, parsing of content).					X	X

4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
4.5.3 Providing contextual information (e.g., visual description, linkages among concepts discussed, added redundancy, reframing, analogies, examples, definitions, cultural information, and explanation of situational protocol).		X			X	X
4.5.4 Monitoring consumer feedback to determine alternative modes of communication and other interventions (e.g., tactual communication, close-vision communication, international signs, adopting the Deaf consumer's preferred signs, cultural specific or idiosyncratic gestures, home signs, use of props, drawing, mime, etc.).		X	X		X	X
4.5.5 Seeking clarification from all parties involved concerning details as needed to accomplish above.					X	X
4.6 Demonstrate ability to recognize when stakeholders may use ancillary aspects or imprinted messages in ways that do not represent an intended consequence of the linguistic interaction.				X	X	X
4.7 Demonstrate ability to monitor interaction to determine whether interpreting is effective; determine when it might be appropriate to stop the proceedings and offer appropriate alternative resources.				X	X	X
4.8 Identify, recognize, and differentiate roles as an interpreter and as an advocate including boundaries expected within the profession and the Deaf community.				X		X

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4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
4.9 When working as a team with a hearing interpreter, demonstrate ability to effectively negotiate aspects of the conjoint work with all parties involved:						
4.9.1 Foster a collaborative interpreting process, working together to verify meaning, gather clarifying information, manage information flow within the team, and effect a mutual monitoring process in the construction of complete and accurate interpretation for all consumers involved.						X
4.9.2 Agree in advance with team interpreter on language use, techniques and strategies for routine and complex interpreting situations and how to adapt and change course as needed.						X
4.9.3 Agree in advance with team interpreter on the use of consecutive and/or simultaneous interpretation and management of switching between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting as needed.						X
4.9.4 Discuss in advance with team interpreter how to manage potential communication breakdowns between team members, including requesting brief team conferences, adapting language use, techniques, strategies, and replacing members of the team, when necessary, in a professional manner.						X
4.9.5 Recognize and effectively navigate potential power dynamics (e.g., perceived roles, cultural disparities, discrimination, oppression, audism) within the team process.						X

4.0 Interpreting Practice Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
4.9.6 When two or more teams are at work, plan how and when to switch so that each team will utilize and build upon existing linguistic concepts to keep the transition from one team to another linguistically clear to all consumers involved.						X

5.0 Professional Development Competencies	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
5.1 Pursue professional development activities that involve interaction with colleagues, peers, and other professionals.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.2 Actively encourage and participate in professional learning communities of Deaf interpreters (e.g., meetings, workshops, conferences, virtual meeting rooms).	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.3 Keep abreast of current trends in interpretation, linguistics, cultural studies, and research.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.4 Stay abreast of knowledge and current trends in a wide variety of subject areas (e.g., medical, mental health, and legal) and any area in which the Deaf interpreter may work.	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.5 Pursue educational and interpreting credentials.	X					