Experiential Learning in Interpreter Education

Rachel Herring and Laurie Swabey

Abstract

This literature review has two purposes. First, it serves as the basis for development of an experiential learning graduation-to-certification program for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters through both face-to-face and virtual environments. Second, it is intended as a reference on experiential learning for those working with interpreters at any stage of their training or professional development. In this context we present theoretical and practical information from the relevant literature in the hope that it will inform interpreter educators' approaches to helping learners develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become competent, autonomous professionals. To support educators and learners on this journey, this review takes as broad and inclusive an approach as possible, touching on many topics of interest in experiential learning and interpreter education, by: defining experiential learning, discussing the design of learning experiences, presenting examples of experiential learning in action, exploring field-based experiential learning, discussing assessment, and evaluating the educator's role in experiential learning. Our focus is on ASL–English interpreter education; however, much of this information is also applicable to the education of interpreters working between other languages.

Key Words: experiential learning, interpreter education, reflective learning, learning cycle, coaching, mentoring, field placement, feedback, learning environment, deliberate practice, American Sign Language–English interpreter education, ASL, service learning, situated learning.

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About the Authors

Rachel E. Herring holds a master's degree in translation and interpreting from the Monterey Institute of International Studies and a Masters of Advanced Studies in interpreter training from the University of Geneva (Switzerland), where she is currently a doctoral candidate. She teaches interpreting at Century College (Minnesota) and works as a Spanish interpreter at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. She has presented on interpreting and interpreter training in a variety of venues, has developed continuing education modules for interpreters on linking theory to practice for the CATIE Center at St. Catherine University (Minnesota), and has been involved in the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare's training-of-trainers webinar series. Her academic work centers on skill acquisition, expertise, and self-regulation in interpreting.

Laurie Swabey, PhD, is professor of interpreting and the executive director of the CATIE Center at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. She is the principal investigator on a grant funded by the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, to investigate, pilot, evaluate and implement evidence-based practices for teaching interpreting. Her doctorate is in linguistics from the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include interpreting in the healthcare context and interpreting pedagogy. Dr. Swabey's research has been published in several journals, most recently in *Sign Language Studies* (2017); *International Journal of Research and Practice in Interpreting* (2016); *Journal of Interpreting* (2016); *International Journal of Interpreter Education (2016, 2015)*; *Journal of Healthcare Quality* (2016); and the *International Journal of Translation and Interpreting* (2014). Dr. Swabey is also the co-editor of two books: *Advances in Interpreting Research* (Benjamins, 2011) and *Educating Healthcare Interpreters* (Gallaudet University Press, 2012). She has served as an advisor to the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters, as well as on the board of directors for Conference of Interpreter Trainers and American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association. Dr. Swabey's most recent national and international conference presentations include Critical Link in Edinburgh, Scotland (2016); the 6th International Conference on Public Service Interpreting and Translating in Madrid, Spain (2017); and the International Symposium on Signed Language Interpreting Research in Washington, DC (2017).

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What is Experiential Learning?

Introductory Remarks: Situating this Document

> An interpreter who possesses competent autonomy is knowledgeable about what is required for each situation in which they interpret and is confident in exercising this knowledge to make decisions about how the work should be conducted. As well, the interpreter who is able to work with competent autonomy also readily recognizes what they are not qualified to do and has the ability to secure the appropriate resources needed to proceed in a manner that protects the interests of all parties involved in the communication event. They have discretion—professional judgment—that is informed by experience and standards of professional practice. (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005, p. 23)

These lines describe a desired outcome of interpreter education. The difficulty of achieving this goal is attested to by the evidence that graduates of ASL–English interpreting programs are generally not earning national (RID) certification within the first year after graduation (for in-depth discussion of this point see Godfrey, 2010), as well as by the many publications discussing the challenges of teaching and learning interpreting. This document mines the field of experiential learning for theoretical and practical information that can usefully inform educators' approaches to the task of helping learners develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become competent, autonomous professionals.

Experiential learning is a holistic enterprise which engages with all aspects of the learner (Kolb, 2015). It takes many forms and is encountered in a wide range of settings, including elementary- and secondary-school classrooms, universities, service learning, clinical or practical experiences, outdoor/wilderness expeditions, and the corporate world. Among the works reviewed are volumes focused on experiential learning in academic settings (e.g., Kurtz, Silverman, & Draper, 2005; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010); on learning experiences for college students that take place outside the classroom, such as service learning and field-based learning (e.g., Evans, 1999; Qualters, 2010a); and on experiential learning in general, but with a primary focus on experiential learning in adult, non-academic settings such as corporate or wilderness-based activities (e.g., Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Roberts (2012) used the metaphor of a river to examine the field of experiential learning: a river may look uniform when we take the high view, as from the edge of a cliff, but a closer look reveals currents and countercurrents that interact with each other and make the picture more complex; moreover, features of the landscape outside the river also influence the river itself. His text took a close view, seeking to understand the various philosophical currents existing

within the river of experiential education as well as influencing factors outside the river, arguing that "there are real consequences to the concepts we employ at the practical level. How we choose to frame and construct experience, to a great extent, defines and determines the kinds of questions and answers we will seek" (Roberts, 2012, p. 15). The scope and purpose of this document do not attempt the close reading undertaken by Roberts; rather, this document only skims the surface of a large and complex field. It is presented as a practical guide for individuals involved in interpreter education, rather than an in-depth introduction to the field of experiential education.

In their classic text on situated learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) described learning as a process of becoming: through interaction with and in a community of practice, the learner is progressively integrated into the community, eventually achieving status as a fully-participating member of the community of practice. From this perspective, learning is an integral and socially-rooted part of (professional) practice, rather than something that is done to a person in order to prepare them to subsequently join a profession. They also argued against conceptualizing learning as a process independent of other aspects of life; as Wenger (2009) put it, "learning is not a separate activity. It is not something we do when we do nothing else or stop doing when we do something else" (p. 213). Wenger (2009) suggested that educators who approach learning as a process of becoming should seek means of:

> engaging students in meaningful practices, of providing access to resources that enhance their participation, of opening their horizons so they can put themselves on learning trajectories that they can identify with, and of involving them in actions, discussions, and reflections that make a difference to the communities that they value. (p. 215)

In addition, when educating interpreter educators,[1] Winston (2005) argued that interpreter educators must go beyond mastery of the competencies involved in interpreting;[2] they must also:

> master effective approaches for developing these competencies, or rather, for guiding students to accept responsibility for learning, constructing their own understandings about them, and applying their understandings critically by assessing their own thinking and actions critically. (p. 215)

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[1] In order to cover the widest range of settings and types of learning, this document uses *learner* and *student* interchangeably, preferring learner where possible. It also uses *educator* and *teacher* interchangeably, preferring educator where possible. These generic terms are used inclusively to cover a wide variety of settings and types of learning experiences. Direct quotations preserve the wording of the original.

[2] Winston specifically referenced the Conference of Interpreter Trainers' National Interpreter Education Standards, which evolved into the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education standards, found at http://ccie-accreditation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CCIE_Accreditation_Standards_2014.pdf.

This point was reiterated by Taylor (2013), who urged interpreter educators to educate themselves about effective approaches to teaching and learning:

> For interpreter education to maximize the learning outcomes of its students, each program, and the interpreter training community in general, must assess whether or not they are leveraging the most demonstrably effective methods to bring about deep and lasting change and professional development in its students. (p. 6)

We hope that the general concepts and specific examples discussed in this document will provide useful guidance for educators as they navigate the waters of experiential learning together with learners.[3] In order to support them on this journey, the document takes as broad and inclusive an approach as possible, touching on many points on the spectrum of both experiential learning and interpreter education. We sought to include material relevant to virtual and face-to-face environments, classroom-based and field-based learning experiences, and interpreters at all stages of their learning and professional practice. Although our primary focus is on education of ASL–English interpreters, the information is also highly applicable to the education of interpreters working between other languages.

Definitions and Key Characteristics

This section presents several definitions of experiential learning and lists some of its key characteristics. Kolb's (2015) text on the subject stated that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 49). A more detailed definition was offered by Beard and Wilson (2013), who defined experiential leaning as "the sense-making process of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment" (p. 26). They stressed that experience is "the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning" (Beard & Wilson, 2014, p. 4).

Beard and Wilson noted that despite some disagreement as to what experiential learning *is,* Weil and McGill defined it by what it is *not*:

> Both the experiential theorist and the educational practitioner seem to agree on what experiential learning is not. It is definitely not the mere memorizing of abstract theoretical knowledge, especially if taught by traditional formal methods of instruction such as lecturing and reading from books. (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 24).

[3] Readers who do not have access to an academic library can find many of the journal articles cited in this document in the *International Journal of Interpreter Education* http://www.cit-asl.org/new/ijie/ or *Translation and Interpreting* http://www.trans-int.org/index.php/transint. The full contents of these journals are available free online.

This conceptualization of experiential learning was echoed by Kurtz et al. (2005, p. 71) who described it as involving a focus on one's own behavior rather than on a lecture or book.

Beard and Wilson (2013) quoted a number of definitions of experiential learning. According to Jarvis, experiential learning "begins with experience and transforms it into knowledge, skill, attitude, emotions, values, beliefs, senses" (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 25). Hutton's definition of experiential learning was referenced as "learning that is rooted in our doing and our experience. It is learning which illuminates that experience and provides direction of the making of judgements as a guide to choice and action" (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 25). Finally, Boydell's explanation of experiential learning posited it as "synonymous with 'meaningful-discovery' learning…which involves the learner in sorting things out for himself by restructuring his perceptions of what is happening" (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 25).

Although learning can and does arise from experience, experiences are not inherently educational. Roberts (2012) emphasized "some [experiences] may simply be non-educative; others may be mis-educative" (p. 59), in that they impede or disturb future experiences or learning. It is also important to note, in this context, that experience is a mutable concept which is difficult to define. It is individual and subjective, but it is also co-constructed by the people experiencing it. Our perspectives, our backgrounds, and our interactions with others involved in the same set of circumstances frame and color our experience. Our understanding of our own experiences may also shift with time as we revisit past memories and view them in light of new experiences (Beard & Wilson, 2013).

The key characteristics of experiential learning are as follows:

- Experiential learning focuses on the process of learning rather than on observable behavioral outcomes. The learning process is understood to be cyclical and continuous, rather than linear and limited/finite (Kolb, 2015).
- Experiential learning presupposes the learner's involvement with/exposure to the external environment. Learning involves changes of the learner's cognition, behavior, affect, and/or understanding of the world, but those changes do not happen solely on the basis of internal processes: they come about as a result of interaction with the world (Evans 1999; Kolb, 2015).
- Experiential learning requires "active involvement" of the whole learner; that is, "thoughts, feelings and physical activity" with the external and internal environment. This involvement between the individual and the environment may at times be painful or difficult (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 5).
- Experience does not automatically lead to learning, and teaching does not automatically lead to learning (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Evans, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991). This may be true when individuals are not ready (developmentally or otherwise) to learn from an experience, when experience confirms pre-existing knowledge, or when an individual doesn't attend to the experience (i.e., ignores or doesn't take advantage of the chance

to learn). In order to learn, the learner must "engage with the experience and reflect on what happened, how it happened, and why" (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 28).

- Learning is inherently personal. The individual learner's prior experience, background, and way of approaching the world influence how that person will respond to a given experience and what that person will learn (Beard & Wilson, 2013).
- Positive learning can come from negative experiences; people can learn from mistakes. Given that mistakes are more likely to occur when an individual is working at the edge of his/her capabilities, mistakes can be a positive thing in the end. At the same time, the educator's response to mistakes or lackluster performance is important: negative or discouraging experiences may be harmful, creating barriers to further learning (Beard & Wilson, 2013).
- The educator is not solely responsible for posing problems (issues to be confronted or discussed) for learners to solve. Both learners and educators are involved in identifying problems and working together to investigate them—learning is thus a process of joint inquiry (Freire, cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013).
- Learning outcomes and assessment should not focus only on declarative knowledge and cognitive skills; they should be holistic, encompassing facets of competence such as interpersonal skills, performance skills, and adaptive skills (Kolb, 2015).
- Experiential learning does not only include learning from present experience (concurrent learning). Learning may also be retrospective (i.e., learning now from past experience), or prospective (i.e., imagining/forecasting into the future; may include observing others who are engaged in a task that the learner may someday do) (Beard & Wilson, 2013).
- Learning and improving performance at a skill requires an investment of time and effort, including structured, deliberate practice (Kolb, 2015; Schafer, 2011).

Designing Experiences for Learning

Learning Environments and Barriers to Learning

Interaction between (the) individual(s) and the environment is central to experiential learning. When we think of learning environments, our first thought is often the physical learning environment—the space in which learning occurs. Physical learning environments vary greatly, depending on the field of study and type of learning opportunity. Learning takes place in many venues, including classrooms, virtual environments, outdoor spaces, informal spaces, common areas, community settings, and workplaces. The physical environment has an unavoidable influence on educators and learners, even when it is not the impetus for the learning activities being carried out. Beard and Wilson (2013) argued that institutions designing physical learning environments (whether virtual or in person) should consider aspects such as "furnishings, air quality and acoustics, lighting and color," because all of these affect learning (p. 98).

Design of virtual learning environments has received an increasing amount of attention as online learning has become more popular. Although the scope of this document does not allow for in-depth discussion of virtual learning environments, many of the concepts discussed in this section are also applicable to online learning. Readers interested in further reading on the subject of virtual learning environments in interpreter education are directed to Ehrlich and Napier's (2015) volume *Interpreter Education in the Digital Age.*

Individual educators may have a fairly limited amount of control over the physical environment in which they work with learners—although they can decorate an office, rearrange chairs in a classroom, or choose a community location for a mentorship meeting or workshop, they cannot usually influence or modify the architecture of the physical space. Educators have more ability, however, to influence an equally—perhaps even more—important facet of the learners' experience: the psychological learning environment. In this section we discuss the importance of and approaches to establishing and maintaining a psychologically safe learning environment.

Kolb (2015) reminded us that non-physical aspects of the learning environment, such as psychological, social, cultural, and institutional/systemic factors, influence learning. Learning is also influenced by the learner's prior experiences. Although we hope that prior experience is a positive and motivating force, this is not always case; in fact, prior experiences can inhibit learning (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Evans, 1999; Kolb, 2015; Kurtz et al., 2005). Learners may have pre-existing assumptions or prejudices that create barriers to learning, or they may have had negative experiences that impact their motivation or self-concept, for example, "some students reported experiencing the converse of these attitudes [i.e., respect, building confidence] such as being spoken to in a condescending or judgmental way, being ignored or avoided" (McSharry & Lathlean, 2017, p. 76). Such experiences will inevitably influence learners' acclimation to the learning environment and their participation in learning opportunities. Kolb (2015) argued that appropriate design of the learning environments plays a role in mitigating affectual and psychological barriers to learning (see also Cox, 2013).

The need for learners to feel included in their classroom and their field of study—to have experiences that engender a sense of belonging or fitting in—was highlighted by Williams (2016). Her dissertation sought to better understand the lack of diversity in ASL education programs and faculty. She stressed that educators must take race and other issues of identity into account as they plan their curricula, identify materials for classroom use, and engage with students.[4] She also urged educators who may have only one or two students of color in a given learning situation to be "proactive in addressing issues related to students of color who may be the only person of color in the class and viewed as a representative of their race. This sense of

[4] One example she provided relates to the common suggestion that ASL interpreters should wear dark clothing because it contrasts with skin tone. As she pointed out, this assumes that the interpreter's skin is pale (i.e., that the interpreter is white), and is both insensitive and potentially isolating for learners of color.

‘oneness’ can also present problems in the classroom that include cultural isolation and unintentional but subtle acts of racism perpetrated by White students” (Williams, 2016, p. 72). Although her study focused on Black students and faculty, her recommendations seem equally applicable to other aspects of identity besides race. Indeed, Forestal (2005) quoted a deaf interpreter whose comments resonated strongly with Williams’s argument:

> Often when I go to interpreting workshops that are other than deaf interpreting, I am the only or one of very few deaf persons there; the hearing participants want to use me or the few of us as a role model or examples which takes away what we wanted to come for. I came there to learn too, not to be asked on how we would sign or do some things they want to know about or practice on us. I wish there would be workshops for only deaf interpreters where we would have no pressure and we can be free to open our minds and have intense discussions to stretch our minds. (Forestal, 2005, p. 251)

Forestal’s (2005) discussion of deaf interpreters’ experiences with interpreter education also highlighted educators’ responsibility to respond to the needs of specific groups of learners. She noted (at the time of her writing) a lack of rigor and depth, as well as a lack of specific research and theory, related to deaf interpreter education and called for educators and researchers to remedy this deficit. Forestal, a deaf interpreter and professor, surveyed other deaf interpreters about their experiences with training. Among the issues discussed by the respondents, those most relevant to this review include a lack of materials specifically targeted to deaf interpreters, difficulties related to engaging with and learning from lecture-type presentations and a clear preference for active/experiential learning activities,[5] the need for instruction and practice in teaming with hearing interpreters, and the need to increase mentoring opportunities for deaf interpreters.

Cox (2013) also mentioned a number of barriers to learning. For his dissertation, he interviewed other ASL interpreting educators about their experiences with and conceptualization of learner-centered education. During the course of these interviews, the educators reflected on their own prior experience as learners and, along the way, identified some elements of their educational experience which they had not found conducive to learning. These barriers included being singled out by an educator in an isolating or derogatory way; feelings of being an inadequate student; mismatches in educator–learner style; the educator not showing interest in individual students (for example, by reaching out to them or checking in with them); and perceptions that the educator did not motivate learners to succeed.

The nature of interpreting and interpreter education gives rise to another set of issues that strengthen the argument for establishing and maintaining psychologically safe learning

[5] On this point, see also Cox’s (2013) remarks about the fit between deaf cultural preferences and student-centered approaches to learning.

environments. First, ASL–English interpreters are generally still acquiring their second language at the same time they begin taking interpreting courses (Monikowski & Winston, 2003; Quinto-Pozos, 2005). Second, interpreting is a performance skill which requires use of the body and the voice, and learning to interpret involves receiving feedback from others (and from oneself, in the form of self-assessment) on aspects of performance that may be closely linked to the individual learner's sense of identity or self-concept. Both of these issues are worthy of consideration by interpreter educators.

Quinto-Pozos (2005) noted that being ridiculed for mistakes or being made to feel self-conscious about one's second-language skills may affect learners' progress. Cox (2013) also highlighted the anxiety that interpreting students may feel with regard to their language skills. Experiences that may impact an individual's sense of identity or self—such as having to perform a skill in front of others, or assessing one's abilities at a skill—may also be met with resistance, whether conscious or unconscious, as Kurtz et al. stated "Considerable discomfort may well ensue from entering a programme that requires you to examine and possibly change something that seems so closely bound to your personality and self-concept as communication behavior" (2005, p. 73).

Although Kurtz et al. (2005) were discussing the challenges inherent in engaging medical students in learning around communication skills, their comments are relevant to interpreter education as well. Interpreter educators have identified that when it comes to engaging students in discussion around sensitive or uncomfortable topics, "not all students feel comfortable contributing to the discussion, and it is challenging to break down barriers so that students can trust one another to effectively communicate about sensitive issues" (Ehrlich, Ergulec, Zydney, & Angelone, 2013, p. 74). On-the-job or clinical placement experiences can also frequently be a source of anxiety for learners (Evans, 1999).

Quinto-Pozos (2005) highlighted motivation and the willingness to take risks as important factors supporting successful language acquisition and learning, and Schafer (2011) encouraged educators to foster a growth mindset—an attitude of "I can do it"—in learners. The opportunity to develop strong relationships with peers and educators is also important for learning. Petronio and Hale (2009), for example, evaluated outcomes of two very similar programs and identified the cohort structure and social aspects of the learning environment as crucial factors in learner success.

Learners' own perceptions of themselves as learners—that is, feelings and thoughts about themselves and their abilities—also influence their learning (Kolb, 2015). Kolb (2015) recommended a number of metacognitive strategies that, in his view, supported a positive sense of oneself-as-learner:

- Placing one's own experience at the center of the learning process;

- Understanding learning as a process and being patient with that process;
- Taking risks, viewing failure as a necessary and potentially positive part of the learning cycle, and laying aside emotional responses to failure;
- Being aware of and periodically re-visiting perceptions of one's own abilities and strengths as a learner; making the effort to remember successes and failures equally (rather than focusing on one or the other); monitoring the nature of self-talk (i.e., avoid negative self-talk);
- Developing the habit of mindful attention to the present moment and to the learning process.

In their discussion of individuals' socialization into a community of practice via what they term legitimate peripheral participation, Lave and Wenger (1991) noted that this process has the potential to be empowering or disempowering for the learner. This point serves as a reminder to interpreter educators of their responsibility to be a positive force within the lives of the learners with whom they work. The following list provides some recommendations from the literature on establishing and maintaining positive learning environments:

- Evaluate the extent to which the physical surroundings meet the needs of the learners. Re-evaluate periodically (Kolb, 2015).
- Be attentive to the learners' experience of the learning environment (Cox, 2013; Kolb, 2015; Williams, 2016).
- Consider using sensory stimuli, relaxation techniques, and/or humor to set a positive mood and reduce barriers to learning such as stress and fear (Beard & Wilson, 2013).
- Establish and maintain a welcoming and respectful learning environment. As part of this, work together with learners to establish clear values and ground rules for behavior and interactions within the learning environment (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Kolb, 2015; Kurtz et al., 2005).
- Take active steps to establish a psychologically safe learning environment in which learners work together (rather than in competition with each other), gain confidence in their abilities, and feel empowered to express their views, feelings, and difficulties. This may include open discussion of prior educational experiences—both positive and negative—and of possible issues that may impede active participation in the classroom (Cox, 2013; Kurtz et al., 2005; Williams, 2016; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010).
- Provide an appropriate introduction to the learning environment, and make expectations and roles of educators and learners clear. Where appropriate (for example, in field placements) mutually agree on a learning contract or set of goals (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Evans, 1999; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010).
- Give learners responsibility for their own learning (Kolb, 2015).
- Encourage learners to focus on their learning—to be present and engaged in the moment (i.e., to practice mindfulness) and to be attentive to their own learning process (Kolb, 2015).

Table 1. *Establishing the Right Climate for Learning*

Term	Meaning	Example
Congruence	The presenter should practice what he or she preaches.	If the course is about listening skills, the trainer should demonstrate use of listening skills.
Trust building	Participants will work best when there is a trusting atmosphere.	If participants know how feedback will be handled, they are more likely to be more trusting and open with one another.
Clear purposes	The purpose of each event should be clear.	Participants will know why they are undertaking the event.
Emphasize the positive	The emphasis should be on how to get things right.	Give plenty of positive feedback.
Create ownership	Ideas should come from participants themselves.	The trainer should ideally facilitate this learning process in a non-didactic way.
Whole people	Participants' home and non-work lives affect how people feel and learn.	The trainer should enable participants to share these whole-person concerns in a safe environment.
A complete process	The event should be considered as a whole.	Learners should be able and willing to put the training into practice.
Client-centeredness	People find most value in the ideas they discover for themselves.	The task of the trainer is to respond to those needs flexibly and individually.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Education, Training and Coaching (3rd ed.)* by C. Beard and J. P. Wilson, 2013, p. 74. Copyright 2013 by KoganPage.

The Educator in Experiential Learning section of this paper contains further discussion of the educator's role in the learning environment, learner–educator relationships, and feedback. It is important to note that although individual educators bear a large responsibility for the quality of the learning environment in their specific milieu (whether it be a site placement, a classroom, a virtual environment, or a mentoring session), institutions and organizations are

also responsible for establishing system- or organization-level norms and cultures conducive to learning. Cox (2013) stressed this point, noting that administrative support is key to learner-centeredness in academic programs.

Ethical Considerations

In writing about experiential learning in workplaces and in the outdoors, Beard and Wilson (2013) argued that providers of experiential learning opportunities must take potential ethical issues related to this type of education into consideration and follow relevant best practices. Professional organizations for outdoor and adventure experiential educators also highlight the importance of ethical behavior.[6] Although the types of ethical issues that arise for educators in these disciplines may be substantially different than those facing interpreter educators, ethical issues related to classroom experiences and field placement are also worthy of consideration.

Though their focus was on clinical skills practice in nursing and medicine, Grace, Innes, Patton, and Stockhausen's (2017) exploration of ethical considerations related to classroom experiential learning raised important questions for interpreter educators. Grace et al. reviewed the literature on peer modeling—in which students practice new skills, such as performing an examination or drawing blood, on their peers—to understand how issues such as consent, privacy, cultural norms, and safety are addressed before and during such activities. They reported on a number of steps taken to ensure that learning activities are carried out ethically, including obtaining informed consent, providing students with written information about the activities to be carried out, engaging students in discussion about the ethical and cultural issues involved in carrying out examinations or other procedures on fellow students, preparing in advance a plan for how to handle any potential medical issues identified during the activity, having students participate on a voluntary basis, and the use of simulated patients, family or friends in place of classmates. Grace et al. also noted that although many potential ethical issues may arise in learning activities involving peer-to-peer examination or procedures, there has been very little evaluation of the efficacy of safeguards against them. They strongly recommended that institutions where such activities are carried out establish policies and procedures to safeguard students and avoid or mitigate ethical and safety issues:

> It is time for universal adoption of strategies to ensure that students learn clinical skills in a safe, equitable and ethical manner…. Ethical experiential learning experiences are important because educators in health courses who demonstrate ethical behaviors towards their students are modelling the kind of behaviors and attitudes required for ethical healthcare practice. (Grace et al., 2017, p. 20)

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[6]See Association for Experiential Education http://www.aee.org/ and the National Association for Experiential Education http://www.nsee.org/ websites.

Although interpreters do not practice on each other in the sense discussed by Grace et al. (2017), similar ethical issues may be present in experiential learning activities undertaken as part of interpreter education, such as role plays, peer-to-peer feedback, and group analysis or discussion of learners' performances. Interpreter education (and frequently, ongoing interpreter professional development) requires individuals to engage with issues closely linked to identity and self-concept. Interpreting students (who are by definition learners, and whose second-language and interpreting skills may be more- or less-developed) are often expected to perform in front of an audience that may be composed of peers, future colleagues, and future clients; they may also receive feedback on their performance from these groups. Even though activities such as these prepare learners for real-world experiences in which their performance will be judged by service users, they also have the potential to cause psychological harm or create barriers to future learning. Grace et al. listed several factors which may facilitate or hinder learners' participation in these type of activities; although their list was specific to their subject, it provides food for thought to interpreter educators considering the ramifications of learning activities on learners' wellbeing. Thus, as discussed in the immediately preceding section, Learning Environments and Barriers to Learning, it behooves educators to consider the establishment and maintenance of a psychologically safe learning environment from an ethical perspective as well as a pedagogical one.

Cohen (2010) noted that learners commonly experience ethical challenges during field placement activities and argued that the faculty and administrators who supervise such experiences have a responsibility to provide mechanisms for students to confront and learn from ethically challenging situations rather than bypassing or ignoring them. He took issue with the idea that the ethics-related instruction received in core classes was sufficient support for learners participating in field placements, and advocates for offering specific, structured opportunities for reflecting on placement-related ethical issues in parallel with the placement itself, as well as for training educators to work through such issues with learners.

Due to the nature of interpreters' work, ethics and ethical decision-making are a central concern of interpreter education. In-depth discussion of teaching and learning around ethics in field-based education is outside the scope of this document. For discussion of placement-related ethical issues, readers are referred to the literature on teaching interpreters about ethics and ethical decision-making.

The Experiential Learning Cycle

One common way of modeling the learning process is as a cycle or spiral composed of four stages. Kolb (2015) called the stages concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (see Kolb, 2015, Figure 7.22, p. 303); Beard and Wilson (2013) referred to them as experiencing/noticing, interpreting/reflection,

generalizing/judging, and applying/testing. Although the model is represented in a two-dimensional, linear fashion, it is generally understood as being dynamic and flexible. The point of entry into the learning cycle is not specified, and progression through the stages is not considered to be sequential or fixed—learners may begin at any of the four stages, may not pass through them in order, may pass through stages multiple times, and may experience multiple stages at once (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Kolb, 2015). According to Honey and Mumford, passing through all four stages (i.e., completing the cycle) is considered necessary in order to truly learn (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013). Beard and Wilson (2013) noted that the learning cycle may be modeled as a single loop (such as that proposed by Kolb) or a double loop (Argyris & Schön, as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013). The second loop occurs when the learner steps outside the learning cycle and considers whether the task(s) s/he is engaged in are right—that is, s/he checks assumptions and assesses whether the problem or question being addressed is indeed appropriate/adequate, or whether another perspective or approach ought to be adopted.

Kolb (2015) stressed the need to take the entire learning cycle into account when designing and facilitating learning activities. He argued against focusing on only one or two stages of the learning cycle or treating one or more stages as an afterthought. Learners need to have physical, temporal, and psychological/cognitive space to engage equally with all the stages of the learning processes—that is, that opportunities must be provided to experience, reflect, think, and act. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) also emphasized the need for interpreter education to allow learners to engage with all of the stages of the learning cycle.

Bentley-Sassaman (2009) mapped the four stages of the learning cycle onto activities that happen in the interpreting classroom. These activities are: identifying interpreting practice as concrete experience; observing and commenting on one's own or someone else's performance as reflective observation; analyzing one's own work, identifying strengths and weaknesses and connecting it to classroom learning as abstract conceptualization; and trying out new or different strategies in subsequent interpretation exercises as active experimentation. She recommended explaining the learning cycle to learners in order to help them conceptualize the learning process better.

Consideration of all four stages of the learning cycle does not only take place at the level of the individual educator/learning opportunity; it may also be taken into account at the program level, as with D'Hayer's (2006) description of how aspects of the interpreting program at her institution reflected the four stages:

- Concrete experience—educators are practicing interpreters; learners are exposed to mock interpreting situations.
- Observation/experience—integration of case studies, peer assessment, self-assessment, and reflection into the curriculum.

- Forming abstract concepts—tying theory to practice.
- Testing out learning in new situations—taking a cyclical approach to learning; providing repeated opportunities to engage in simulations and use dummy booths[7] throughout the program.

Learning Activities

Learning activities are generally designed to facilitate a learner's progress from a current level of performance to a desired level of performance (Beard & Wilson, 2013)—that is, to teach the learner something by providing an opportunity to engage with and learn from some type of experience. One framework for designing learning activities was proposed by Beard and Wilson (2013):

- Begin with a goal or objective for the learning activity.
- Include movement toward a destination, or a sense of progressing along a journey, in the design; if possible, involve learners in a process of (de)construction related to the experience.
- Incorporate opportunities for learners to employ multiple types of intelligence; to engage from social, mental, and psychological perspectives; to use their senses; and to collaborate with each other.
- Include a sense of challenge or risk (whether real or perceived), and create obstacles or restrictions (this could include physical obstacles, rules/procedures, and/or time constraints) that participants must face.
- Create space for learners to stretch their capabilities by taking risks or trying new things.
- Include physical activities, functional activities, and tasks that draw on organizational/analytical skills.
- Allow for individual reflection on the activity and sharing of experiences within the group of learners.

Beard and Wilson (2013) also recommended sequencing for activities. First, they suggested low-intensity, undemanding activities that engage learners and increase their enthusiasm (such as, for example, icebreakers or team-building exercises). Second, more-demanding activities focused on single, lower-level skills. Third, more intense and demanding tasks that combine lower-level skills. Fourth, they recommended activities designed to consolidate learning and lay the pathway for the learner's future growth and development.

Russell, Shaw, and Malcolm (2010) suggested a sequence of progression for signed-language interpreting students that begins with exploration of discourse and text analysis, then moves on to translation skills and strategies, then consecutive interpreting, then simultaneous

[7] Dummy booths are conference interpreting booths at actual conferences for spoken-language interpreting students to practice their interpreting in real-world situations. Students perform as though they are interpreters at the conference, but their microphones are not on and their interpretations are not broadcast.

interpreting, then switching between consecutive and simultaneous within the same interaction. Winston (2005) argued that an emphasis on critical thinking should pervade all aspects of the interpreter education curriculum: "activities that begin with memory must still explicitly lead to critical thinking. Activities that focus on text analysis must lead students to learning about the text, constructing their own knowledge, and making effective decisions about that text" (p. 230). Educators should also consider whether the activity includes opportunities to engage with all four stages of the learning cycle (experiencing, reflecting, thinking, acting). Kolb (2015) emphasized the importance of allowing time and space for meaningful engagement and re-engagement with all the stages in order to encourage "deep learning" (p. 301).

Another issue to consider when designing learning activities is identifying or creating material (i.e., problems, difficulties, or other source material that is the focus of a learning activity) appropriate to the learners' current abilities and to the learning goals being addressed (Winston & Swabey, 2011). In the context of problem-based learning, Igo recommended that problems (in this case, source material for activities):

> 1. Confuse just enough to provoke curiosity and provide a reason for learning.
> 2. Provoke thought on new things in new ways.
> 3. Help students discover what they do and do not know.
> 4. Ensure that students reach beyond what they know.
> 5. Create a need and desire for skill and knowledge.
> 6. Lead to understanding the relationship of a procedure to the problem that makes the procedure sensible.
> 7. Naturally lead to interdisciplinary inquiry.
> 8. Build strong communities of learners.
> 9. Create cooperation in the strongest sense that is based on the will and desire to succeed rather than on a set of dictated behaviors that are advocated for the sake of politeness. (as cited in Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010, p. 41-42)

In taking a learner-led approach to teaching and learning there is a concern that negative results could arise from educators' abdication of traditional power roles—that, for example, learners left to their own devices will not adequately identify their own learning needs; needs which will therefore go unaddressed, resulting in necessary content or skill-related areas not being covered (Kurtz et al., 2005). Kurtz et al. (2005) recognized these concerns and advocated for finding a balance between learner-led and educator-led learning, acknowledging the learners' contributions rooted in their own experience while recognizing the educator as a subject-matter expert responsible for establishing the parameters for the learning experience, directing the learners' attention, and occasionally employing traditional didactic methods. Kurtz et al. emphasized that use of learners' own perceived problems as the stimulus for learning (i.e., problem-based learning) does not imply that learners' difficulties are the only focus for

learning, but rather that problems identified by learners are the starting point for engaging with a given subject or issue. Ultimately, the educator is responsible for bringing up considerations or points for discussion beyond those identified by the learners.

In addition to this guidance, Kurtz et al. (2005) provided a useful taxonomy of teaching methods, situating them on a continuum from educator-centered to learner-centered:

- Didactic methods, including lectures, presentations, and reading—activities which "enable learners to understand what it takes to communicate effectively, but do not develop learners' skills or ensure mastery and application in practice" (p. 78); Kurtz et al. stressed that even in settings focused on experiential learning, didactic methods are valuable tools to "make available to learners the concepts, principles, and research evidence that can illuminate experiential learning" (p. 76).[8]
- Experiential methods leading to deeper discussion and understanding, including demonstrations, use of recorded material to stimulate discussion or role-playing, group discussions, and exercises—activities which do not lead to changes in behavior, but do "engage the participants and increase their level of response and involvement" (p. 78).
- Experiential methods leading to action/changes in behavior, including performance of tasks (e.g., role plays, simulations, etc.), recording performance for post-hoc analysis, and interactive feedback/problem-solving on the basis of the performance.

Kurtz et al.'s (2005) primer on teaching communication skills included an extensive compendium of concrete suggestions, techniques, and examples for educators. Although presented in context of teaching medical personnel, the primary focus of this valuable volume was on pedagogy (not on medical content), and it is thus generally applicable to interpreter education.

Prior Experience, the Zone of Proximal Development, and Scaffolding

The literature on experiential learning frequently stresses that learners' own needs, past experiences, and individual interests are ideal points of departure for learning activities (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Evans, 1999; Kolb, 2015; Kurtz et al., 2005). Indeed, Lave (2009) pointed out the fallacy of viewing learners as blank slates on a clean playing field: "It is not the case that the world consists of newcomers who drop unaccompanied into unpeopled problem spaces" (p. 201). Learners come equipped with a vast array of prior experience, assumptions, knowledge, and values. Learning is more likely to occur when learners' past experiences and knowledge are "valued, accepted and used" (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 72), and motivation increases when "the practical difficulties that [the learners] are experiencing act as the stimulus for learning" (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 72).

[8] Evans (1999) made a similar point, cautioning against wholesale abandonment of the conceptualization of teaching as something done to the learner by the educator (e.g., conveying content) and noting that "there are many times when a student simply needs to be told what to do" (p. 34).

Insofar as all new knowledge is built on pre-existing knowledge (Bransford et al., 2000), it behooves the educator to get a sense of what learner(s) already know and use it as the starting point for learning.[9] Evans (1999) argued that educators need to get a sense of what learners already know and can do in order to avoid "belittl[ing] or patroni[zing] the student by attempting to teach them what they already know, and partly in order to help them transfer that learning to a new context" (p. 36). Noting that teaching does not always lead to learning, he urged educators to ask learners about what they already know or are able to do, rather than assuming knowledge or ability based on previous learning opportunities.

Considering the gap between learners' prior knowledge/ability and the learning goals established for an activity or course leads us to the well-established pedagogical concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD), first described by Vygotsky (Bransford et al., 2000). Although usually used with reference to children, the concept is relevant to learners of all ages. It is also a well-known concept in interpreter education, as evidenced in publications by Bowen-Bailey (2012), Gish (1993), and Hoza (2013).

The zone of proximal development is understood to be the range of activities or skills that an individual can complete with some support or assistance; that is, the activity or skill is somewhat above the individual's current level of ability, but not so far above it as to be impossible to achieve given appropriate support. Activities that target the learner's ZPD are generally expected to be the most effective for learning. Evans (1999) highlighted this point, suggesting that preceptors and mentors take the ZPD into account when choosing activities to be completed in field placements. Each individual's ZPD changes as the person learns new skills and becomes more capable. Thus, when designing learning activities and deciding how much (or little) scaffolding to offer learners along the way, it is important to take into consideration the learners' ZPD (individually and as a group) and how it might develop over time.

Scaffolding is the principal technique employed in adjusting the amount of educator-provided support/intervention in response to student needs. The educator takes a more active and supportive role as the learners begin, and progressively takes down the scaffolding, bit by bit, to follow the metaphor, as the learners become more capable and independent. Wurdinger and Carlson (2010, p. 42) described this process as *fading*, noting that instructor guidance lessens as learners become more knowledgeable/capable. Bown (2013) argued that scaffolding benefits learners in interpreting programs in that it "helps to create the internal coping structures for managing stress within practice, guides the thinking process, allows for the selection of suitable responses, informs appropriate decisions, and contributes to the safe management of career longevity" (p. 55). Attentiveness to the learners' ZPD and the ability to

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[9] Prior experience may not always be a positive force for the learner, however, as discussed in the Learning Environments and Barriers to Learning section of this paper.

effectively decide how and when to intervene in the learning process is "at the heart of good practice," according to Beard and Wilson (2013, p. 58). In their view, both too much and too little "control and intervention" (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 59) on the part of the educator can be detrimental; but the right amount, gradually reduced over time, benefits both learning and learners' confidence.

McDermid's (2009) study of Canadian interpreter educators highlighted the importance of integrating scaffolding and the learning cycle into the fabric of a program, rather than leaving it to be implemented by individual educators in their course. He noted that it is difficult to provide systematic support and scaffolding to learners in situations where the curriculum is not clearly defined and articulated.

Much of the theoretical literature on the zone of proximal development and scaffolding is rooted in a social-constructivist philosophy of learning, which shares a number of features in common with experiential education approaches. For an introduction to social constructivism and a practical exploration of its application to translator education, interested readers are referred to Kiraly's (2010) volume on the subject, which combines an approachable and cogent discussion of theory with concrete examples and tools. Although he teaches students of written translation, the content is highly applicable to interpreter education.

Real or *Real*?: Authenticity in Classroom-Based Experiential Learning

In designing experiential learning activities, the realness of the experience is an area of concern, especially when the skill being learned is not one that can be readily practiced in real-world settings. It is generally not advisable to ask learners to try out a new skill for the first time on a real-life client (Kurtz et al., 2005), and some activities cannot be practically or safely practiced in a real-life setting (Crezee, Burn, & Gailani, 2015; and Crezee, 2015, made this point concerning interpreting). Chouc and Conde (2016) described the difficulty of having conference interpreting students interpret in a real-world environment:

> Due to the very nature of the activity, the interpreters (be they trainees or professionals) have only got one chance to "get it right" when the microphone is on. Recovery techniques exist, but they require a high degree of experience and practice. Therefore, it is hard to imagine a context in which a trainee interpreter would provide live interpreting under the tutelage of a professional, as there is hardly any leeway for the professional to correct the message before it is delivered to genuine users. (p. 94)

Chouc and Conde's (2016) point is valid, if perhaps overstated—there are indeed situations in which conference interpreting students provide live interpretation under the supervision of

experienced interpreters,[10] but, as they noted, there are also many circumstances in which student interpreters (especially those at the beginning or middle of their training) are not given the responsibility of interpreting for real-world clients. Although the time constraints of simultaneous conference interpreting are less present in dialogue consecutive interpreting, interactions being interpreted are often sensitive and have high stakes, with little leeway for in-the-moment teaching/correction. Other interpreting situations, such as courtrooms or classrooms with mixed deaf/hearing student populations, largely share the time constraints identified by Chouc and Conde.

These considerations do not, however, mean that beginning interpreting students cannot benefit from realistic or authentic practice situations. In fact, beginning students may be better off with not-quite-real learning opportunities. As Beard and Wilson (2013) pointed out, "high levels of reality do not always present the best options for learning" (p. 149). They suggested that low levels of reality are more conducive to learning in cases when the learners need to feel free of pre-learned or pre-imposed boundaries or restrictions, when high-reality situations might be perceived as threatening or inhibiting, or when the goal is to have the learner contemplate and try out new or significantly different behaviors or approaches. In their view, educators' primary challenge "is to find the right type of experience that is immediately appealing to the learner and also has a longer-term impact" (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 38).

Beard and Wilson (2013), drawing on the work of Kirk, suggested three dimensions of reality for educators to consider when designing activities:

- Participant reality: to what extent is the learning activity consistent with the learners' jobs/working environments/abilities and expectations?
- Theoretical reality: is the content being learned consistent with scholarly knowledge and approaches in the field and does it cohere well with reality as experienced by the learner? (that is, does it gel with what I was taught in my BA program AND does it gel with what I experience in the field?)
- Resource reality: does the activity balance the costs of resources invested in the design and running of the experience with the prevalence of the activity in the real-world?

In the context of communication skills teaching, Kurtz et al. (2005) argued that observing learners engaging in the task they are being trained to do is fundamental to skill acquisition.

[10] For example, Herring, co-author of this paper, attended a conference interpreting school where advanced spoken-language students interpreted live at conferences organized by/at the school and provided simultaneous interpreting services for limited English proficient attendees at community-organized events. Herring has also attended conferences on interpreting at which advanced spoken-language students provided simultaneous interpreting services. Such a setup would be more problematic for sign language interpreting, given that deaf participants in the conference rely fully on the interpreters for access to the spoken portion of the proceedings (and, conversely, hearing participants rely fully on the interpreters for access to the signed portion of the proceedings), whereas hearing participants listening to spoken language presenters can presumably access either the common language of the conference or the student-produced interpretation, as they see fit.

This point would seem to be equally relevant to interpreters, and, indeed, interpreting pedagogy largely focuses on having learners perform, record the performance, and receive feedback (whether from others or through self-assessment), as illustrated by the many examples of experiential learning in action described in the following section. As Kurtz et al. noted, learning by trial and error is possible, but learning through observed performance with feedback afterwards is more efficient and can be helpful for avoiding plateauing.

Simulated or realistic experiences can be valid learning opportunities in situations where real-world practice is not feasible, especially if the learners perceive them as realistic, whether in a physical or emotional sense (Beard & Wilson, 2013). Role play and simulation are commonly-employed methods for practice, observation, and feedback in experiential learning in general, and also in interpreter education. The importance of (role-)play in experiential learning is highlighted by Beard and Wilson, who note that role play “can facilitate problem solving and enable people to enhance awareness and understanding” (2013, p. 152).

Kurtz et al. (2005) did not recommend the use of role play in isolation—they stipulate that to effectively enhance learning role plays must be combined with opportunities for performance analysis, reflection, and feedback. These points are similar to those made by Beard and Wilson (2013), who cautioned educators to consider the purpose of a given role-playing activity when planning it, noting that the learning objective should determine the approach to developing the exercise, briefing the learners, and debriefing after the exercise. Among the possible goals for role-plays that they identified are “to describe and demonstrate events, to practice skills, to give feedback or to sensitize people to reflect upon events” (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 153). Role plays and simulations also offer the opportunity to try out new skills in a safe environment, to rehearse the same scenario more than once, and to refine the individual’s approach to the task (Kurtz et al., 2005).

These methods can also be flipped on their heads—that is, the educator can model behaviors and skills for students to observe. Indeed, Kurtz et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of modelling in the sense of providing demonstrations of skills/behaviors as well as in the sense of teaching by example. They cautioned, however, that modelling must be combined with other methods, as learners are not necessarily able to identify the skills the model is employing. Learners may identify a model as gifted or especially good at the task but need guidance to analyze specific aspects of the performance.

Although viewing video-recorded models or demonstrations may seem to remove the learner from the experience itself, recorded stimuli are important tools for interpreter education. Major, Napier, and Stubbe (2012) point out one benefit of video recordings is that they allow educators and learners to “slow the text down to an extremely detailed level and look at it closely multiple times and from multiple perspectives” (p. 46). Bontempo and Hutchinson

(2011) also suggested that viewing a model of "good" performance carried out by an educator or competent performer is more effective than a discussion of possible strategies to try in a given situation.

Bringing real-world materials into the classroom is another way of increasing the authenticity of learning experiences. For example, interpreting educators can draw on authentic practice materials (such as educational videos created for and used by clients/service users, which are often available on the internet) and even bring objects or other realia, such as medical equipment, into classrooms in order to create what Crezee described as "simulated situated learning" (2015, p. 53). Another approach to providing realistic performance (and learning) opportunities to learners is through joint simulations involving interpreters and students of other professions (e.g., psychologists, doctors, social workers, etc.), such as those reported on by Thumann and Smith (2013) and Crezee (2015), both of which are described in more detail in the Experiential Learning in Action: Examples from the Interpreting Studies Literature section of this paper.

In considering realistic learning experiences that are accessible to beginners, educators must also be mindful not to create too great a separation from the world of the classroom and the world of professional practice. Taylor (2013), for example, urged educators to foster learners' sense of themselves as developing professionals from the beginning of their educational program in order to keep them engaged and motivated, and develop their professional self-concept. This involves exposing them to authentic activities and materials, as well as making connections between what they are doing in class and the realities of their future professional lives.

Expertise Studies and Deliberate Practice

The ability to competently perform a task—in this case, interpreting—is incrementally developed over time, primarily through practice. Not all practice is alike, however, and time on task does not necessarily correlate with an individual's skill level. Research into skill acquisition and expertise has given us insight into how to approach and structure learning activities and practice sessions more effectively. This section provides a brief overview of novice and expert performance differences, skill acquisition, and deliberate practice[11] drawing on the work of Ericsson (2000); Hoffman (1997); Moser-Mercer (2000, 2007, 2010); Moser-Mercer, Frauenfelder, Casado, and Künzli (2000); Motta (2011); Liu (2008); Jääskeläinen (2010); and

[11] Elsewhere in this document, *practice* is often used to refer to professional practice. In this section it refers to structured activities undertaken with the specific goal of improving performance, either in connection with a formal class or workshop or as part of a professional development process.

Anderson (2015).[12] See also Schafer (2011), who wrote about deliberate practice on the context of sign language interpreter education.

Before proceeding it is important to note that we do not study expertise to make comparisons or to separate people into expert and non-expert groups. Understanding the characteristics of expert performance and the processes involved in skill acquisition helps us to refine our pedagogical approaches and improve performance by better understanding the cognitive processes involved in achieving competent performance at a complex task involving a number of skills and sub-skills.

Novice and Expert Differences

Research in a wide range of fields has shed light on cognitive differences between novice and expert performers. It seems obvious to note that novices, who are just beginning to learn a skill, (in this case, interpreting) have less declarative (knowing facts, information) and procedural (knowing how to do something) knowledge than their expert counterparts. Knowing less is not the whole story, however. Novice knowledge is stored and accessed differently than expert knowledge.

Experts' knowledge is contextualized and can be accessed with less overt cognitive effort, while novice knowledge is decontextualized and requires more cognitive effort to retrieve. We can think of novice knowledge as a filing cabinet where information is arranged in separate folders in alphabetical order that have to be searched through serially. As the individual gains expertise, the neural connections between related bits of knowledge (declarative and/or procedural) are strengthened and knowledge becomes conceptually organized, like a set of interconnected nodes or bubbles full of information and procedures related to a given concept or task. Experts are better able to draw on schema, notice patterns and relevant details, draw on their past experience, and grasp the big picture of a situation; novices tend to process information in isolation, get lost in details and are more likely to get stuck when they encounter a novel or difficult situation. In dialogue interpretation we see evidence of this difference in novices' tendency to understand each utterance in isolation (rather than as a part of a whole encounter) and to get stuck on individual words, while competent performers are better able to process utterances at the discourse level and draw on a broader context. A simple way of

[12] This section is based on a number of conference presentations and workshops delivered by co-author of this paper Herring, including: "Skill Acquisition and Expertise in (Medical) Interpreting," presented at the International Medical Interpreters Association Conference, 2011; "Expertise and Skill Acquisition in (Community) Interpreting," co-presented with Manuela Motta at Critical Link 7, 2013; "Cut Your Cloth to Fit Your Coat: Tailoring Instructional Activities to Context-Specific Learning Goals," presented at the American Translators Association conference, 2014; and "Straight into the Deep End? A Systematic Approach to Skill Acquisition and Goal-Setting in Interpreter Training," part of the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare's Home for Trainers webinar series, 2014 (available for viewing at www.ncihc.org).

thinking about differences between novice and expert performance is to say that novices tend lose sight of the forest for the trees, while experts are better able to see the forest.

It is true that some individuals who might be considered experts at a task by virtue of their training and experience do not consistently exhibit expert-like behavior or ability, especially when faced with the need to adapt to new situations or conditions. Some individuals maintain expert-level performance as long as the task remains within certain parameters, but revert to novice-like performance when faced with unusual or challenging circumstances. This is what is known as routine expertise. Other performers may revert briefly to novice-like behaviors when faced with new challenges but are able to quickly adapt their performance and return to expert-level performance. This is called adaptive expertise (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). Adaptive experts are described as having metacognitive knowledge and skills, that is, being aware of and being able to control one's own cognitive processes, and being continually engaged in efforts to improve their level of performance, even after having attained competence (Moser-Mercer, 2007).

Another term found in the literature to describe this type of performer—one who continually seeks new opportunities to learn and develop their skills, no matter what level of performance they have attained—is reflective practitioner. One of the primary aims of interpreter education is to encourage learners to develop into reflective practitioners, as described by Bowen-Bailey and Shaw (2012, p. 108) who stated that the educational program led by Shaw seeks to develop "self-monitors and self-regulated learners. It is critical that they leave [the institution] with those abilities because they're not going to have us always there giving feedback." Among the hallmarks of reflective practitioners, as described in the literature, is that they are not inclined to be self-defensive or to focus on their status; rather, they stay engaged with learning and practice throughout their lives. This goal dovetails well with the focus on reflection and engagement with one's experiences highlighted in the experiential learning literature. Later in this section we describe deliberate practice, which was proposed as a method for developing metacognitive skills and fostering adaptive expertise. First, however, we briefly discuss skill acquisition and how it can inform interpreter education.

Understanding Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition occurs in three stages (Anderson, 2015). The learner must first become familiar with the task s/he is to perform—what is it? How does it look/sound when performed by someone else? What are the steps that must be completed? This is the cognitive stage of skill acquisition, when the learner begins to understand what to do and must attend to all of the required steps/actions as they are performed. After a time, the learner no longer has to attend quite as much to each individual portion of the task—s/he gains a more holistic understanding of what must be done, and cognitive connections between the various required subskills are

strengthened. This is the associative stage, in which the learner begins to be able to identify and fix performance errors. The learner eventually reaches a level of performance in which s/he is able to carry out the task more automatically, without having to expend conscious effort on every step; this is called the autonomous stage. Although we divide skill acquisition into stages in order to better understand it, it important to recognize that it is not necessarily a linear process. Learners may regress, reach plateaus, or leap ahead. Regression often occurs when a new skill, sub-skill, or component is added to a task; the learner's performance at the task may deteriorate temporarily while the new skill/component is learned and integrated into performance.

Understanding skill acquisition and expert (highly competent) performance is beneficial to educators in a number of ways. Knowledge of experts' cognitive processes and organization of knowledge helps us to understand how the brain changes as skills are acquired, which, in turn, supports a reasoned and systematic approach to interpreter education. It allows us to plan and structure learning opportunities more effectively, and to view learning as a structured progression from novice to competent performer.

It is also helpful to be able to draw connections between problems learners face and the realities of the learning process. Many things that worry students are expected parts of the learning process, and realizing this can be reassuring to both learners and educators. A classic example of this is the beginner's preoccupation with not being able to identify the right word/sign for a given situation. Skill acquisition and expertise research have demonstrated that novices have a hard time seeing the big picture; instead, they fixate on small things. Although we cannot necessarily change novices' worries in this regard, we can normalize the phenomena they experience, framing them as natural and normal, rather than as major obstacles.

In a similar vein, educators can often predict problems or challenges and alert learners to them—letting them know, for example, that a given behavior or problem is expected and is related to their current level of skill acquisition, rather than being a sign that they are incapable or not good at interpreting. For example, in spoken language interpreter education, learners will often find that their listening skills deteriorate when they begin to learn note-taking. It is helpful to normalize this process for them by framing it as a temporary regression related to adding a new sub-skill to an already complex task.

Taking an analytical approach to skill development also helps both learners and educators as they diagnose and address learners' challenges and weaknesses by providing a framework for isolating and focusing on problem areas. As discussed in the topics focused on learning environments, educator–learner relationships, and feedback in The Educator in Experiential Learning section of this paper, it is important for learners to feel psychologically safe in order to learn well. Self-assessment of task performance often involves an initial emotional response,

and it can be difficult to learn to separate the performance and the person (i.e., the difference between "I did a bad job" and "This performance exhibited weakness in X area"). An understanding of skill acquisition and a deliberate practice approach, as discussed in the following paragraphs, can help learners get past the initial emotional response and engage in more effective self-assessment and reflection.

Deliberate Practice

Doing is the central idea of experiential learning (Kolb, 2015), and repetition of an activity—practice—is an important factor in acquiring a new skill, but time on task is not the whole story. As Kolb (2015) noted, "time spent practicing does not necessarily lead to learning and improved performance" (p. 352). People do not always continue to improve their performance at a skill over time, even with practice. Many times individuals will hit a plateau and not exhibit further improvement even with more time on task. As educators, our goal is to encourage learners to continue to develop their skills—to avoid getting stuck—and to do so efficiently and effectively. Research into skill acquisition and expertise suggests that performance improvement is more likely when "individuals, who [are] motivated to improve their performance [are] given well-defined tasks, [are] provided with feedback, and [have] ample opportunities for repetition" (Ericsson, 2000, p. 193). The type of practice Ericsson (2000) described is called deliberate practice.

A deliberate practice approach to interpreter training focuses more on the quality of practice than the quantity, less on how much the learner knows and more on how to apply what one knows in the course of performance (Moser-Mercer, 2007). It requires:

- Motivation—a deliberate practice approach presupposes that learners want to improve their performance at the skill being acquired/practiced. Ericsson (2000) highlighted this point: "engaging in an activity with the primary goal of improving some aspect of performance is a prerequisite of deliberate practice" (p. 193).
- Well-defined tasks—deliberate practice clearly delineates activities and goals.
- Concrete, achievable goals—practice sessions focus on specific, attainable, and measurable performance goals (for an individual and/or group).
- Feedback from others—feedback from peers or educators helps to assess performance and guide future practice sessions.
- Analysis and reflection—learners assess and reflect on their own performance and ways to improve it (see the next section, Reflection, for further discussion of reflection and self-assessment).
- Cyclical—a given subskill, topic, goal, or exercise may be visited and re-visited over time, with progressively more challenging material or goals; a given stimulus may also be practiced with (i.e., interpreted) multiple times, with a new goal set for each attempt based on the results of the previous attempt.

- Systematic—practice activities and exercises are reasoned, planned, and progressive. In other words, the approach to deciding what to do, when to do it, and how to do it is not haphazard.
- Not necessarily fun—deliberate practice requires sustained focus over time. It should not, however, be demotivating.

Setting goals is an important aspect of deliberate practice, whether in the context of an individual learner's practice or within planned course activities. Goals can be set for groups or for individuals, and can be educator-determined or student-determined. Educators are generally responsible for setting goals that will allow for individual subskills (such as analysis, production, or interaction management) to be addressed separately and together in a structured, progressive fashion. In general, it is best to identify a goal and choose exercises that will allow for targeting that goal, rather than vice versa.

Goals help to focus the learner's attention. Practicing without a goal can be overwhelming because of the number of potential targets for monitoring. The ability to monitor one's performance is crucial, but this ability develops over time. Novices can have difficulty with identifying targets for monitoring: they cannot monitor everything at once, but also don't necessarily know what to pay attention to. The educator serves as an important guide in the process of identifying aspects of performance to attend to, especially during the early stages of skill acquisition. For example, during a specific practice session an educator might focus novices' attention on analysis of pragmatic features of language, or on a using a specific interaction management strategy. Goals also help to reinforce the deliberate practice cycle, in that they encourage learners to engage in self-assessment and revisit their performances multiple times, setting new goals for each attempt.

Herring (2015) recommended that goals be:

- Specific: What precisely is it that we are talking about? One salient characteristic of novices is that they do not know where to focus their attention. That is why it is important for trainers to focus learners' attention on specific aspects of performance, especially in the beginning stages. For example, telling students to "do a good job" is not a specific goal. Instructing them to "re-direct parties consistently and smoothly to use the first person and talk directly to each other" is specific, as it tells the learner which aspect of performance should be the focus of this particular exercise.
- Attainable: Does the goal lie at the edge of the students' current skill level? Although focusing one's efforts on something that one can already do well is not an efficient use of class or practice time, attempting something that is too far above one's current level can be discouraging and demotivating. For example, telling students to "use appropriate strategies to manage the flow of communication" is probably attainable for beginners who have learned about dialogue interpreting standards of practice. "Successfully use note-taking strategies in support of accuracy and completeness during a three-minute

utterance" is probably not an attainable goal for the same group of students if they have not yet had any training in note-taking.

- Measurable: How will the trainer and the student know whether the goal was met? Telling students to "produce a good target language utterance" is not measurable, but telling them to "produce grammatically-correct target language utterances" is more specific, and therefore measurable.
- Progressive: How does the goal fit in with previous and future goals? The goals we set should fit together like pieces of a puzzle. They should build on existing skills and allow room for adaptation and increasing difficulty based on individual needs.

Although deliberate practice can and should become something that learners do independently, they require guidance from educators as they develop good habits for goal-setting, analysis, and reflection. As mentioned above, novices are less able to identify specific areas of their performance as targets for monitoring. They may also lack the ability to effectively assess their own performance (Monikowski & Peterson, 2005). Schafer (2011) pointed to the results of studies, such as Kruger and Dunning's, showing that "unskilled practitioners lacked the meta-awareness to see their own lack of proficiency and, as a result, overestimated their abilities" (p. 18-19). Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel (2014) highlighted the need for educators to teach learners to "determine what they know and don't know to more accurately judge their progress and focus on material that needs more work" (p. 123) so that they can "judge their own performance more accurately" (p. 121).

Reflection

Reflection is an integral part of experiential learning, as illustrated by the fact that it is one of the stages of the learning cycle; it is also important in developing reflective practitioners, as discussed above. According to Beard and Wilson (2013), Dewey defined reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it leads…it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality" (as quoted in Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 258). Evans (1999) referenced Boud et al.'s definition of reflection as "those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation" (as quoted in Evans, 1999, p. 57). He highlighted three aspects of reflective learning which he considered to be especially important: "it includes feelings as well as thoughts…it focuses on experiences and…it brings about change" (p. 57). Evans also concluded that Dewey's work suggested a fourth aspect: that reflection be "more purposive and sustained than an accidental, fleeting thought" (Evans, 1999, p. 57).

One benefit of reflection is that it allows learners to learn from both conscious and unconscious experience. In the latter case, reflection can draw learners' attention to aspects of their

experience they may not have consciously attended to at the time. Reflection also permits detailed analysis of experiences that may have been difficult or confusing, expands learners' worldview by encouraging them to connect and contrast their experiences with those of others, and promotes connections between theory and practice (Evans, 1999). Reflection encourages learners to engage with the material from their preferred approach and learning style, to integrate various aspects of their learning, and to test out their ideas; it also creates richer learning experiences and facilitates transfer (Beard & Wilson, 2013). Individuals do not automatically reflect on or learn from every experience they have. Evans (1999) posits that a number of emotional and cognitive aspects of an experience may trigger reflection, including surprise, doubt or confusion, discomfort, and knowledge and awareness about some aspect of a specific circumstance; it may also be triggered by external forces (such as other people).

Although most individuals can and do reflect on experience, not everyone has the same natural tendency or ability to engage in reflective thinking. Bown (2013) highlighted the need for educators to guide learners in developing the habit of sustained, in-depth reflection of the sort necessary for professional practice. Qualters (2010c) stated a similar point very frankly: "students will need instruction in reflection just as in any other discipline skill" (p. 96), and Winston (2005) listed teaching learners to engage in self-assessment as one of the principal duties of the interpreter educator. Beard and Wilson (2013) also urged educators to provide structured space for reflection on performance and experience.

Moore (2010) argued that simply asking learners to reflect on their classroom- and field-based experiences is not sufficient. In his view, learning requires that connections between experiences in the two different settings be made (via the participation or assistance of an educator of some sort) and repeatedly pointed out to the learner(s). Moore saw this type of "interrogation" of the experience as the key to successful transfer; he noted, however, that students are often resistant to engaging in more than superficial reflection.

To encourage learners to engage in more comprehensive reflection, Evans (1999) identified five processes that are part of reflection:

- Description: remembering the experience and describing it. Description is inherently selective in that it presents only a partial account of what occurred and filtering will inevitably occur. Evans stated that detailed description of an experience may be less necessary when all those involved in the reflection were present for the event; this point contrasts, however, with Kurtz et al.'s (2005) emphasis on hearing the learner's description of what happened in order to gain insight into the learner's experience (that is, to get a sense of what the learner identified as salient, problematic, etc.).
- Analysis: "identifying the constituent parts of an experience and conceptualizing them at a level of abstraction which moves beyond the concrete detail" (Evans, 1999, p. 64). The ability to move from details to abstract understanding of a situation is seen as key

to transfer—although the specific situation may not occur again, other situations will occur that are similar in some ways; thus, analysis is a key factor in the ability to learn from a situation and apply that learning in a future one. Analysis is also an opportunity to make connections between theory and practice.
- Synthesis: a higher-level analysis, bringing all the pieces (all the abstract ideas) together into a unit—a high-level view or understanding of the experience within the broader context. The learner arrives at a point of decision or change, achieving new insights, taking next steps, or making a judgment.
- Evaluation: taking a critical view or "placing a value" (Evans, 1999, p. 67) on one's performance or on the experience. For Evans, evaluation develops the learners "awareness and understanding" (1999, p. 64) while the learner may not be able to influence things external to his/her own performance, s/he develops the ability to engage critically with experiences.
- Feeling: being aware of emotional states and reactions, using them productively, setting professional boundaries, and self-care. For Evans, this is a fundamental consideration for learners who work in (or are preparing to work in) the caring professions. He argued against taking a prescriptive or normative approach to thinking and talking about feelings with learners, advocating instead for giving students "space and time to come to terms with strong feelings, sometimes by themselves and sometimes in the company of someone who recognizes and accepts their feelings" (1999, p. 69).

Reflection is often thought of as a solitary process (i.e., the learner reflecting alone), but Evans (1999) argued for providing opportunities to reflect as part of a group. This aligns well with Kurtz et al.'s (2005) approach, in which a group of learners observes a peer performing a role play or simulation, followed by a whole-group session of reflection and feedback on the experience. Reflecting on an experience with a group of peers allows individual learners access to others' perspectives on the event itself as well as on their own performance. Reflecting on experience in dialogue with an educator, whether individually or with peers, is also a valuable experience, but may be inhibited (or at least affected) by power dynamics. Establishing a safe, trusting climate for reflection is another facet of the educator's responsibilities in relation to the learning environment, as discussed elsewhere in this document. Beard and Wilson (2013) outlined several factors to consider when designing good conditions for reflection: autonomy in acting and making decisions; receipt of feedback on one's performance; the opportunity to interact with others; an appropriate amount of pressure to perform well; time and space in which to reflect.

Schön (as cited in Beard & Wilson, 2013) identified two moments for reflection—reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action (or, as Beard & Wilson, 2013, call it, concurrent learning) involves paying attention to and learning from one's experience while having the experience. Reflection-on-action corresponds to what is more generally thought of as reflection: reviewing and analyzing past experiences in order to learn from them. Evans (1999) recommended that post-hoc reflection take place as soon as possible after the

experience so that the experience is still fresh in the learner's mind. Kurtz et al. (2005) urged the use of audio- or video-recordings of performances in order to provide an objective (insofar as possible) record to serve as the basis for reflection.

Another possible—and crucial—moment for reflection is in advance of action (Evans, 1999). This is similar to what Beard and Wilson (2013) called prospective learning, in which the learner analyzes and reflects "on the experiences of others who have been involved with an activity that [the learner is] contemplating in the future," which allows learners to "have a reasonable expectation about what might happen and how [they] might respond" (p. 46). Another type of reflection prior to action is that undertaken in order to help learners plan and prepare for future experiences (whether in the learning setting or in future professional roles). Evans (1999) argued that this is a fundamental role of the educator in field settings. This argument could also be effectively made in regards to classroom teachers, and, indeed, many of the example learning activities mentioned in the Experiential Learning in Action: Examples from the Interpreting Studies Literature section touch on the need for interpreters to prepare for activities or assignments; however, evidence indicates that standardized practices for preparation are not yet utilized in ASL–English interpreting (Nicodemus, Swabey, & Taylor, 2014).

Frameworks to guide reflection have been proposed by a number of authors. One of these is the critical incident analysis (incident, in this case, should be read as *experience–performance–thing that happened*), which consists of a number of questions for learners and has been widely used for many decades (Evans, 1999). Evans (1999) outlined the types of questions asked in critical incident analyses, matching them up with the five reflective processes he identified and suggesting four additional questions:

- Description: Where and when was the incident? What exactly happened in the incident? What people were involved? What were their actions, including your own?
- Analysis: Why was the incident critical? What did you find demanding, challenging, rewarding?
- Evaluating: What do you think you did well? What do you think you could have done better? What else might you have done?
- Feeling: How did you feel during and after the incident?
- Synthesis: What is your main learning from the incident? How would you summarise the incident?
- Which theories do you think help explain the incident?
- Which competences/assessment criteria did you demonstrate during the incident?
- What made you recognise this incident was critical?
- What fundamental assumptions, if any, have been challenged by the incident? (p. 75-76)

The question "What made you recognize this incident was critical?" would probably apply to learner-initiated instances of reflection, rather than to ones selected or initiated by an educator.

Other methods for reflection mentioned by Evans (1999) include keeping a journal or logbook and completing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, and forward planning (i.e., identifying next steps, making an action plan). He also emphasized that questions should come from the learner, not only from the educator. In addition, Dean and Pollard's (2011, 2013) demand control schema and Llewellyn-Jones and Lee's (2014) role-space model are also frequently employed as frameworks for reflection in interpreter education programs.

Beard and Wilson (2013) cautioned educators to not limit reflection to verbal/written modalities, but rather to try creative methods such as pictures, graphic representations of the learning activity or process, movement, and dramatization, a technique illustrated by Zhong's (2010) assignment in which learners drew cartoons to illustrate aspects of interpreting theory and practice. For their part, Wurdinger and Carlson (2010) advocated strongly in favor of having learners present the process and results of experiential learning activities live, in front of an audience, arguing that "an exhibition helps [learners] to organize their experience and put it into words that will hopefully be understood by their audience." In interpreter education, educators are also reminded that learners may present on their work in any language shared by the audience; for example, learners may be encouraged to complete their reflections or other academic work in ASL rather than in English (see Shaw & Thumann, 2012, and Collins & Stone, 2014, for discussion of presenting academic papers in ASL).

Educators wishing to further their understanding of the place of reflection in learning and professional practice or looking for texts on the subject to provide to learners are directed to the excellent volume by Bruce (2013), which came to our notice after this paper was largely completed. Although directed towards social workers, the book offers a clear, accessible entrée into the subject of reflective practice and is largely applicable to interpreters and interpreter educators. In addition to touching on many of the themes explored in this document, it reviews the literature on reflective practice and includes prompts and activities suitable for use with learners in a variety of settings.

Retrospective Reports: A Method for Encouraging Reflection

Englund Dimitrova and Tiselius (2014) described retrospection as a method whereby an individual performs a task (e.g., interpreting) and immediately after completing the task recounts his/her cognitive processes during task performance. Retrospective reports[13] on

[13] Some authors use *think aloud protocol*; however, for terminological clarity we prefer the term *retrospection* to describe this method. Readers interested in further reading on this distinction are directed to Englund Dimitrova

performance are a well-established research method in interpreting studies (Englund Dimitrova & Tiselius, 2014) but may also serve as a useful tool for encouraging in-depth reflection and developing metacognitive abilities (Russell & Winston, 2014; Smith, 2014).

The use of retrospection as a research methodology requires that much care be taken with how the retrospection is set up and how the researcher interacts with the respondent, so that the retrospections reflect the individual's thinking during the task as accurately as possible, rather than the individual's post-hoc reactions or self-evaluations (Englund Dimitrova & Tiselius, 2014; Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Russell & Winston, 2014). These methodological considerations are not, however, of central importance for educators who seek to use retrospections as a learning tool rather than as part of a research study. This brief section focuses on the use of retrospection as a learning tool.[14]

Retrospection may be uncued—in which the individual recounts his/her thought processes without any kind of trigger or prompt—or cued. For cued retrospection (also called stimulated recall), the individual is provided with an artifact to help trigger memories; in interpreting studies research, the cue may be, for example, a transcript of the original speech or message, a video recording of the interpretation, or a transcript of the interpretation. Retrospection may also include questions asked by an interviewer. Russell and Winston (2014) note that cued retrospection is "used to explore the types of knowledge structures, cognitive processes and learning strategies participants relied on during a performance" (p. 108).

In analyzing the retrospections and performances of educational interpreters interpreting a video of a classroom teacher, Russell and Winston (2014) found that interpreters whose retrospections demonstrated critical thinking and drawing connections between the interpreting process and the classroom environment were generally judged more effective performers than interpreters whose retrospections did not demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. Although their study was small, they suggested that interpreter educators consider using retrospections (both cued and uncued) as a pedagogical tool in order to better understand learners' development, increase learners' metacognitive abilities, and promote higher-order thinking. In the same volume as Russell and Winston's (2014) work, Smith (2014) discusses the utility of retrospection for learners and educators, arguing that it "allows one to establish self-reflective practices to hone and refine one's work" (p. 129) and to focus on process rather than product—that is, to examine how the individual goes about the task, rather than focusing on evaluating the output. She presents examples of how retrospection can be used as a tool by students, educators, and professionals engaged in ongoing skill development. One

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and Tiselius (2014), Ericsson and Simon (1993), Gass and Mackey (2000), Henderson and Tallman (2006), Russell and Winston (2014), and Woods (1993).

[14] Educators interested in retrospection as a research methodology are referred to the authors cited in this section and in the next footnote.

recommendation she makes is for educators to interpret and then to complete a retrospection as a model for learners; this allows learners to see a professional at work and gain insight into the professional's processes.

Learners can also perform retrospections of their own performances, as Russell and Winston (2014) also suggested. Smith (2014) viewed retrospection on one's own work as a tool for exploring one's own attitudes, beliefs, and approaches to one's work. Although the classic view of retrospection as a research methodology seeks to explore all the individual's thoughts during performance, Smith suggested the possibility of focusing in on one area of the performance as a pedagogical or professional development strategy—for example, on meaning transfer, on decision making, or on preparation for a specific assignment.

Experiential Learning in Action: Examples from the Interpreting Studies Literature

Experiential learning approaches are widely employed in interpreter education programs, even if they are not labeled as such. Cox (2013) pointed out that interpreting is an activity that the learner must do—the very nature of the task precludes passivity, at least to some extent. He also noted that learner-centered education is especially responsive to differences in learning styles and cultural preferences, and is therefore well-suited to interpreting classrooms. Roberson, Russell and Shaw (2012) also emphasized the importance of practice in realistic mock scenarios (their study focuses on legal interpreting, but the point seems broadly applicable): "The benefit of hands-on experience, analyzing one's own work coupled with feedback and supervision, and seeing the work modeled in order for practitioners to acquire the skills necessary for this specialized area of work cannot be overstated" (p. 66). They noted that preparation and protocol should be part of this training.

Participants in McDermid's (2009) survey of Canadian interpreter educators mentioned a number of experiential or active learning activities, including group/team work, games, debates, dialogues, peer feedback, and student self-evaluation. Winston (2005) reported on another survey of interpreter educators which asked respondents to describe their favorite and least favorite teaching activities. Most of the favorite activities mentioned were learner-centered and involved developing critical thinking, decision making, and/or self-assessment skills; teacher-centered activities and those focused on scoring/grading were generally mentioned as less-preferred. Her findings also suggested a need for educators to "better understand how to structure and assess the activities" (Winston, 2005, p. 219) they do with learners—an end which we hope this paper will support.

There are a number of publications from the interpreting studies literature[15] that fit within the broad category of experiential/active learning activities. Metzger (2000) provided an in-depth discussion of and recommendations for carrying out unscripted role plays with interpreting students. Interpreting live role plays is considered especially important for dialogue interpreting skill development, as it allows learners to practice dealing with the interactive and pragmatic features of interactions (management, turn taking, etc.). She described a progression of classroom activities, beginning with observation and analysis of both interpreted and non-interpreted interaction, reading, and discussion, then interpreting from video-recorded stimuli, then live classroom role plays. She also offered a number of recommendations for educators planning live, unscripted role plays in the sign language interpreting classroom:

- The participants in role plays should not share each other's language, in order to increase the authenticity of the interaction.
- The deaf person(s) should be a professional or someone with experience/training in the subject of the conversation, and should preferably be paid.
- The hearing person(s) should be interested in the topic and motivated to learn more from the deaf person. Sometimes (student) actors are a good choice, as they can be primed to display specific behaviors (interactive/pragmatic features of language, etc.).
- Role plays can involve multiple speakers (i.e., more than two interlocutors), as this is something frequently encountered in real life.[16]
- Educators should have a contingency plan in case of last-minute cancellations or emergencies.
- Learners may take charge of many tasks related to organizing and scheduling role play sessions, as this prepares them for many real-world tasks.
- Learners should be briefed on the subjects to be discussed in the role plays and have the opportunity to prepare for the interpretation.
- Role plays should be video recorded for subsequent analysis and reflection.
- Participants should give written consent for the video recording and use of video recordings in class activities.
- Debriefing should include the participants; they can provide student interpreter feedback on their experience as a user of interpreter services, on the interpreter's performance/behavior/choices, and so forth.

Russell et al. (2010) also discussed role plays in their overview of teaching consecutive interpreting, which they saw as a fundamental skill for signed language interpreters. Many of their recommendations echoed Metzger's (2000). Rather than have role play participants

[15] The overview is not intended to be comprehensive. The authors carried out keyword searches of relevant databases, reviewed tables of contents of relevant journals, and drew on their knowledge of the interpreting studies literature in order to identify and access publications and gather what could best be described as a convenience sample. We did not consult textbooks or material produced for pedagogical purposes, of which there are many excellent examples. No slight is intended toward any publication or author not included in this section.
[16] See Takimoto (2009), and Takimoto and Koshiba (2009) for discussion of the complexities of multi-party interactions.

improvise an interaction, they developed scenarios and provided participants with a description of their roles and the context for the interaction; they also mentioned the possibility of having learners and/or instructors be participants in role plays.[17] Russell et al. (2010) recommended ensuring that role play exercises start out simple and increase in complexity in tandem with the learners' skill level. The first role play exercises that they do with students have the educator playing the role of the interpreter, but in an inappropriate/ineffective manner, providing the learners with an opportunity to see how things should not be done. After a feedback session (for a description of which see the following paragraph), the role play is repeated, with the educator/interpreter making appropriate/effective choices (i.e., providing a good model, in contrast with the previous poor model). Learners are expected to take note of a number of features of the interpreter's and participants' behavior and actions during the role plays and are subsequently engaged in an in-depth process of reflection and analysis, linking their observations to the theoretical material they have studied. In line with Metzger's recommendation, participants in the role play are also given the opportunity to provide feedback. Russell et al. (2010) stressed the importance of actively modeling and teaching constructive, process-focused (rather than person-focused) peer-to-peer feedback:

> We are purposefully teaching and modeling interpreting strategies and processes, interpersonal interaction with participants and colleagues, and interpretation analysis, so students can understand and effectively manage the interpreting without interfering with participant interactions. *We do not assume that students, whether novice or longtime interpreters, have these necessary knowledge or skills.* (p. 116, emphasis added)

In connection with this point, Russell et al. (2010) described an innovative method of teaching learners about receiving feedback by providing an example of how not to receive it. After a demonstration role play (with the educator as interpreter), the educator (as the feedback receiver):

> Models undesirable behaviors, including being defensive and justifying every mistake; blaming participants for [his/her own] ineffective interpretation; claiming obstacles to proper preparation; citing lack of preparation for poor decisions and errors; focusing on lexical choices for equivalence; and dismissing any suggested link to cognitive or

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[17] In Herring's experience in spoken language interpreting classrooms, learners are generally expected to participate as actors in all roles in practice scenarios with their classmates. Role plays are also often scripted; and training manuals for spoken language dialogue interpreters often include a large number of role play scripts. In Swabey's experience in sign language interpreter education, interpreting students and educators usually play roles that align with their native language and hearing status (i.e., deaf students play roles of deaf characters and hearing students play roles of hearing characters in practice scenarios). This is done to promote inclusion of deaf community members in the interpreter education program and also because students are often second language learners of the signed language, among other reasons. Role plays are also less likely to be scripted.

> interactional interpretation models. This demonstration provides students with a frame of reference, offers a contrast for later work, and provides a way to think about the range of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. (p. 116)

Russell et al. (2010) also listed criteria to consider when choosing or creating filmed materials:

- authentic interactions/discourse versus scripted/read (may be simulated for filming)
- complete discourse interactions of 12-15 minutes in length so students experience conventional approaches to interaction, including greeting and leave-taking
- materials with natural, complete, lengthy chunks of discourse so students gain experience deciding when to interrupt for interpretation
- materials that lend themselves to pausing in realistic places
- materials filmed using consecutive interpreting
- inquiry narratives, such as job interviews or medical scenarios
- materials that reflect realistic interactions for effectively using consecutive interpreting/simultaneous interpreting blends. (p. 117)

Although the focus of her article was mentoring, Humphrey (2015) also discussed the use of role plays in the interpreting classroom. She recommended that learners work on role plays in small groups and that there be a qualified mentor (either a deaf person or a certified interpreter) assigned to work with each group and provide feedback/lead discussion after the role play is finished. The article included useful samples of instructions that may be given to mentors and stimuli/instructions for participants in the role plays. She also agreed with Russell et al. (2010) that role plays begin with consecutive interpreting and progress to simultaneous interpreting as learners' skill increases. Swabey and Craft Faber (2012) described a similar learning activity incorporating role play at the National Symposium for Healthcare Interpreters, following a large group presentation on the domains and competencies required for medical interpreting. In small groups, participants observed a simulated doctor-patient interview and then engaged in a facilitated small group discussion. To further apply the domains and competencies, members of each group then participated in role plays, with each role play further illustrating the content presented in the plenary session.

Wang (2015) identified a need for more authentic material appropriate to lower-level students, as well as issues with learners' being able to make efficient, structured use of their independent practice time. He reported on a project which created an online repository of materials for practice, including authentic speeches, interpretations of those speeches by professional interpreters (i.e., models to encourage reflection and self-assessment), and transcripts of the original speech. An online learning platform was used to help structure practice—students were required to practice with a speech, listen to the professional interpreter's rendition, analyze their own and the model's strategies, and engage in discussion with their peers.

Crezee et al. (2015) reported on the use of authentic video clips as stimuli for interpreting practice for interpreting students in a multilingual classroom.[18] Noting the insufficiency of observation of models with subsequent journaling for skill acquisition, they identified publicly available (via the internet) clips of real-world legal proceedings to provide students with practice opportunities. Surveys of the learners' experiences with this activity highlighted the need for educators to brief learners on the context and background of authentic practice materials before using them.

The need for learners to adequately prepare for real-world practice was also highlighted by Chouc and Conde (2016), who arranged for student interpreters to practice in dummy booths at the Scottish Parliament. Learners had the option to visit Parliament in advance of the dummy booth session, as a form of preparation, but not all students chose to do so. The authors found that prior exposure to the real-world environment affected learners' expectations of the task itself, of how they would approach the task, and how they would do on the task, as well as their experience and learning. They mentioned a number of beneficial aspects of combining pre-activity preparation with real-world experiences: learners had a realistic idea of what to expect and a clearer idea of the challenges they would face; they had the opportunity to become familiar with the physical environment, equipment, and procedures associated with the setting (Chou and Conde reference the audio equipment in the interpreting booths, but the point is equally valid for other settings such as hospitals, schools, or courtrooms); and the experience can serve as a motivator for learners—affirming their affinity for the job—as well as a reality check of their current performance level.

Use of authentic narratives in interpreter education was explored by Nicodemus, Cole, and Swabey (2015), who gathered authentic narratives by having students interview practicing interpreters. The narratives served as the basis for a classroom activity in which the story was presented (in written form and in ASL by the student who had carried out the interview) and discussed by the students, who were asked to place themselves in the narrative by discussing what they would have felt and done in the same situation. The activity created an opportunity for learners to place themselves inside the story—to imagine the situation, to react, and to reflect on both the narrating interpreter's experience and their own.

Cornwall (2011, 2013) described several active learning strategies for expanding learners' vocabulary and increasing learners' facility with oral presentations. She provided detailed descriptions of games and activities focused on acquiring setting-specific terminology, expanding learners' repertoires of idiomatic expressions, and telling stories.

[18] That is, a classroom in which all learners and the educator had one working language in common, but did not necessarily share all their working languages.

Ehrlich et al. (2013) addressed the use of discussion protocols in interpreter education and provided a number of examples as well as resources for further exploring the topic. Protocols provide a focused, guided format to engage with a topic. Ehrlich et al. noted that protocols are effective for both offline and online discussions, but that they can be especially useful in countering the possibility for isolation and disconnectedness in online learning environments. They listed a number of benefits of protocols:

- keeping a group conversation focused in a limited amount of time,
- encouraging all members of the group to offer feedback,
- helping less verbal participants offer their voices,
- promoting thoughtfulness by allowing personal reflective time,
- encouraging dialogue featuring multiple perspectives,
- requiring individuals presenting their work to remain silent at times so that feedback and insights offered from their colleagues are not lost,
- reminding individuals return to the evidence offered rather than focus on opinions, and
- providing a safe and supportive structure for all. (Ehrlich et al., 2013, p. 74)

Krouse (2010) also highlighted the difficulty of engaging learners in small group work, despite the many potential benefits. She provided a useful review of the principles of collaborative/cooperative learning, and suggested that group work is more beneficial to learners if they are first taught how to work collaboratively. Among the ideas she presented was designating base groups within a larger group of learners. These small, stable groups meet together periodically throughout a course of study (i.e., a class) to establish relationships and provide support (with learning tasks as well as in other ways), but are not charged with completing a specific project or task together for a grade. She also discussed the idea of “jigsaw” approaches to group work, in which the members of a group each have a piece of a project or task which they are required to teach to the other members so that the project can be completed. In that approach, sub-sets of learners are assigned material to learn (such as understanding a specific linguistic concept, or understanding a discourse analysis approach) in advance of the group work. When group work commences, each group has a representative from each sub-set of learners (that is, an expert on one aspect of the assignment). Each group member is responsible for teaching their segment of the material to the whole group so that the project can be completed. The process involves opportunities for repeated checking in with one’s designated subgroup, as well as with consulting with the instructor, in order to make sure that everyone grasps the material and is able to move forward.

Sachtleben and Denny (2011) identified recognition of pragmatic features of language as an issue of concern for interpreting students, especially in the learners’ non-native language(s). They recruited native-speaker volunteers to engage in spontaneous dialogues based on a

scenario provided to them.[19] The dialogues were video-recorded for classroom use. The classroom activity involved first introducing the context of the video, then multiple viewings and discussion of the video to ensure understanding, then a discussion of the pragmatic features displayed in the video. The videos were subsequently used as the basis for a written assignment and for a reflection activity in which learners reported on real-world conversations, analyzed their pragmatic features, and discussed how they would render the conversation in their respective LOTEs.[20]

Major et al. (2012) outlined an approach to training interpreters via discourse analysis of authentic monolingual interactions. They worked with a healthcare-related academic research group to get permission to use portions of recordings of real-world interactions, and used the recordings in a series of linked classroom activities. For each portion of video, learners were engaged in a task: first, responding to specific questions about the parties' interactions and communication strategies; second, observing and commenting on discourse strategies as a large group; and third, working in pairs or small groups to analyze a video and complete a discourse analysis activity. At the end of the activity, the learners reflected on the exercise in connection with their own interpreting practice and choices.

Although not all interpreter educators agree on the utility of theoretical process models of interpreting in the interpreting classroom (see, for example, McDermid's 2009 survey of Canadian interpreter educators), Lee (2005) argued that understanding a process model of interpreting is beneficial to interpreting students. In his view, it helps them to identify problems at different stages of performance and helps to avoid the tendency to "perceive their own work in a binary fashion: as either all good or (more often, unfortunately) all bad" (Lee, 2005, p. 140); he also noted that focusing on process helps learners to focus feedback and discussion on the work of interpreting rather than on the person (i.e., contributing to a psychologically safe learning environment). He described a classroom exercise in which two learners simulate pre-production and post-production monitoring processes for a third learner, who is charged with interpreting a stimulus. The interpreter may call on one classmate/monitor for help with understanding the source language and on the other classmate/monitor for help with producing the target language output. The exercise includes an opportunity for all the participants to analyze and reflect on the process and their roles in it.

Atkinson and Crezee (2014) urged interpreter educators to teach and model psychological skills, not only technical and linguistic ones, noting that interpreters' self-concept and ability to interact with others are fundamental to professional practice. They suggested having learners complete self-assessment instruments in order to better understand themselves as learners

[19] Each party was given a brief, but neither party was aware of the brief given to the other party.
[20] Language other than English (LOTE) is used as shorthand in cases where the group of learners has English as a shared language but does not necessarily have the same other working language(s).

and as individuals, and described their approach to engaging with students around these issues, including didactic lessons on the chosen topic(s), models of positive approaches, discussion, and role-playing.

Dean and Pollard (2012) introduced an approach to using the demand control (D-C) schema in connection with experiential learning activities. They provided a brief overview of their well-known schema and explored several examples of how it may be used to structure and deepen learners' engagement with and reflection on field observations and experiences. In a different publication, Dean and Pollard (2009) described an application of the D-C schema to a training program for mental health interpreting. The program combined structured observation and facilitated group supervision and involved participants who were already competent, practicing interpreters. Participants observed monolingual interactions (i.e., no interpreter was present/involved). The rationale for observing monolingual rather than interpreted interactions was to allow the observer to focus on the discourse itself, rather than on interpreting choices/processes: when observers "are not constrained or distracted by the particulars of a specific minority-language client or the translation or behavioral decisions of another interpreter, they are better able to learn about the nature of typical dialogues, interactions, goals, and dynamics in a given setting" (Dean & Pollard, 2009, p. 4). The second component was facilitated group supervision, which allowed participants and the educator to engage in in-depth conversations around the observation experience. Dean and Pollard (2009) reported on several iterations of this project, three of which were face-to-face in a specific geographical area and one of which included multiple geographic areas and online supervision groups.

Thumann and Smith (2013) discussed a joint effort between the interpreting program and the counseling program at Gallaudet, in which students in both departments benefited from working and learning together. The authors reported that the collaboration was carefully planned and scaffolded to progress from less-complex to more-complex tasks and activities. Learners in the interpreting department were first presented with basic knowledge about counseling (background, terms, approaches, theory, etc.), and then engaged in in-class practice and research. When joint work between the two groups of learners began, faculty from the respective departments modeled interactions for the learners. They then progressed to joint role plays involving counseling students and interpreting students; these role plays also included pre- and post-sessions (briefings and debriefings). Following the discussions of learning environments and ethical considerations in the Learning Environments and Barriers to Learning section of this document, it is worth noting that the educators involved in this collaboration "remain aware of the potential for real issues to be brought forth and…protect the students in both programs" (Thumann & Smith, 2013, p. 93). They also noted the difficulty of making sure that all parties could understand and participate in the debriefings and

discussions held after the simulated encounters (i.e., not all parties present had a language in common).

Crezee (2015) offered another example of interpreting students learning together with students from other disciplines. She noted that in these collaborations, "the presentation of workable scenarios is of the utmost importance," (p. 59) and described an example of a collaboration between speech therapy and interpreting students in which the students developed the scenarios together, working from their respective knowledge bases. Interpreting students and speech therapy students alike received basic information about the other discipline and some of the major issues faced in the setting. After simulating encounters based on their scenarios—which included manipulation of real materials that speech therapists use to administer speech evaluations—both groups of students reported positive learning outcomes.

Hearn and Moore (2006) described an innovative way of providing interpreting students with authentic practice in interpreting college-level classes. Students enrolled in a course called "Mock Interpreting," in which they were assigned to a class at their university that did not have deaf students enrolled. The students were charged with attending, preparing for, and interpreting the class as though there were a deaf student present. The stimulus for interpreting practice was a real one, but no deaf student depended on the interpreting student's output. During the course of the semester they were observed by and received feedback from their instructor and their peers. They kept a reflective journal and met once a week as a group to discuss their experiences and what they learned.

Many scholars have suggested ways to incorporate technology into interpreter education. Ehrlich and Napier (2015) edited a volume dedicated to exploring the subject. Madden (2011) reported on the establishment of an online repository and community for a group of geographically distant educational interpreters in Australia. Goswell (2012) provided an overview of the use of the ELAN video/audio annotation tool for self-assessment and provision of feedback. Cox (2012) described approaches to using YouTube as a tool for providing feedback to interpreters. Napier, Song, and Ye (2013) reported on a study investigating the utility of iPads for interpreting students. Webb and Ehrlich (2016) offered recommendations for implementation of the application VoiceThread. Ritsos, Gittins, Braun, Slater, and Roberts (2013) reported on the design of a virtual world for learners to practice interpreting dialogues. Monikowski and Peterson (2005) described the use of an online learning platform for reflection and discussion in a service learning course. Ferguson, Makarem, and Jones (2016) discussed the use of class blogs as a tool for reflection; although their focus is on business education, the method is one that could be easily used in interpreter education. Sinha, Rogat, Adams-Wiggins, and Hmelo-Silver (2015) evaluated learners' behavioral, social, and cognitive engagement in collaborative work carried out on an online platform; although their study focuses on middle school students, they described a broadly useful theoretical background and framework for

analyzing collaborative work. Bowen-Bailey (2015) reflected on the need to sensitize learners to issues of power and privilege in the context of interactions over social media. A useful discussion of online interpreter education is found in Bowen-Bailey and Shaw's (2012) interview about a hybrid master's degree course.

We end this section by mentioning the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare's series of training-of-trainers webinars. New installments and recordings of previous installments of this ongoing series are available on the organization's website,[21] free for members and for a small fee for nonmembers. The series covers important topic areas of interest to a wide range of interpreter educators.

Field-Based Experiential Learning

As mentioned in the introductory remarks to this document, Lave and Wenger (1991) conceptualized learning as a social process whereby a learner moves from peripheral to full participation in a community of practice. When learners begin this process in an academic setting, it is common for them to spend some time in the field, often, but not always, toward the end of their academic course of study. McSharry and Lathlean stated this very clearly: "students have to participate in practice in order to learn" (2017, p. 74). Monikowski and Peterson (2005) made a similar point in the context of interpreter education, urging educators to take learning outside the classroom, and Godfrey's (2010) study found that service learning and practicum experiences play an important role in readying interpreting students for the professional world and for certification. Evans (1999), for his part, highlighted field placement's potential as a motivator for learners in the caring profession. Insofar as learners in these fields generally have an active desire to help others, the opportunity to work with service users is generally a positive force for further learning.

Field settings also allow learners to get a sense of how their developing area of professional practice fits within larger systems. Kinnunen (2011) pointed out that translators' and interpreters' work is carried out within the context of other professions or systems (i.e., judicial, educational, medical, etc.), describing their work as "necessary action in a larger activity system" (p. 95). Given this reality, future professionals need to need to understand the systems and cultures within which they will someday carry out their work. Learning experiences in the field play a crucial role in this process, as they allow learners to observe and experience how their work fits in with that done by other professionals.

Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) noted that "the process of transitioning new practitioners into the profession through mentorship, supervision, and direct guidance, and the effectiveness

[21] https://ncihc.memberclicks.net/trainerswebinars

of the assistance provided to new practitioners is referred to as induction" (p. 87) and highlighted the fact that sign language interpreters in the United States do not consistently receive a structured induction into the field. Opportunities for induction are optional, vary from place to place, and are not always available, a fact further discussed by Witter-Merithew, Laurion, Gordon, and Mathers (2014). Despite lack of a formal process for induction, learners generally do have opportunities to engage in field-based learning during or after their formal education. This section explores three forms of field-based learning commonly encountered in the context of interpreter education.

Service Learning

The academization of interpreter education over the past several decades has distanced the deaf community from the process of selecting and training interpreters (Cokely, 2005; Monikowski & Peterson, 2005; Shaw, 2013; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005). Regarding this change, Monikowski and Peterson (2005) commented that lack of interaction with the community makes it more difficult for learners to acquire necessary linguistic and cultural competency during their training. One response to decreasing the distance between the deaf community and students has been to have students engage in service learning, which Monikowski and Peterson (p. 192) defined as "a form of experiential learning that emphasizes students' needs to reflect on the dynamic relationship between self and community" and combines academic work with active reflection on the relationship between self and society. This section provides a brief introduction to the concept of service learning and to its use in interpreter education.

Roberts (2012) observed that service learning is increasingly popular, but cautioned against assuming that individuals engaged in service learning are truly learning from completing a set number of hours as a volunteer in the community, noting that "concerns have arisen in regards to the lack of theoretical depth in conceptualizing service learning methodologies" (p. 99). In the context of interpreter education, Shaw (2013) reiterated this point, emphasizing that service learning is more than "merely being in the presence of Deaf community members, participating in community events, observing other interpreters, providing pro bono interpreting, or participating in optional service projects" (p. 4), nor is it merely a mechanism to facilitate learners' immersion in language and culture. With regard to viewing volunteer or pro bono interpreting as a type of service learning, Monikowski and Peterson (2005) argued that student interpreters do not yet have the skills to perform independently, and therefore discouraged the practice.

Shaw (2013) described service learning as a joint, mutually-agreed-upon process that benefits the deaf community as well as the learner and identified four essential aspects:

- Commitment to community partnership: learners work together with a local, state, or national organization or group within the deaf community.
- Learning and academic rigor: learners draw on the scholarly literature and other resources to learn about service learning and about issues relevant to the organization's needs/focus/areas of concern.
- Intentional reflective thinking: learners engage critically with their experience in the service learning project and complete structured reflections on it.
- Practice of civic responsibility: learners "come to realize that they have a place in the Deaf community where they can work consistently through their careers without exerting power and privilege or in any other way compromising the trust that has been placed in them as interpreters" (Shaw, 2013, p. 15).

Service learning thus places the community's needs at the center of the frame (Monikowski & Peterson, 2005), while providing a learning opportunity for students. Monikowski and Peterson (2005) outlined the integration of service learning into an interpreter education curriculum (including sample course descriptions) and discussed its outcomes and student learning. Later, Shaw (2013) offered a book-length exploration of planning and implementing service learning courses throughout the interpreting curriculum. As Shaw explained, "Through reading, critically thinking about and recording the process, interacting with the instructor, collaborating, participating in a project, and evaluating stakeholder impact, students undergo a *learning* experience that would be difficult to duplicate in a classroom setting" with the goal of "becom[ing] intercultural collaborators rather than mere observers of the Deaf community" (2013, p. 23-24). Readers interested in service learning for interpreter education are directed to these works for more in-depth information.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a form of experiential learning which has been frequently discussed in the ASL interpreting literature; for example, the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Center's (NCIEC, 2009) white paper on mentoring ASL–English interpreters included an annotated bibliography with 18 mentoring resources or publications. Winston and Lee (2013) and Gordon and Magler (2007) have also dedicated entire volumes to the subject. This section is therefore limited to a brief introduction to some major themes and issues. It also describes three examples of mentoring programs (all of which post-date the NCIEC's white paper) and one example of a mentor training initiative.

Mentoring arrangements may be formal or informal, time-limited or open-ended, structured or unstructured. In this section we primarily focus on formal, (somewhat) structured mentorships, given that they are the focus of most of the mentoring-related literature in the field of signed language interpreting.

Although it may occur in many forms and formats, mentoring is, generally speaking, a process in which an experienced professional takes a less-experienced trainee or new graduate under his or her wing and provides career- or performance-related guidance, support, or coaching. Mentoring relationships have always existed, although they were not historically referred to as such, because "humans…thrive best when they can grow in the presence of those who have gone before" (NCIEC, 2009, p. 2). Mentoring is of special importance to interpreters due to the reality in which new graduates of programs often find themselves: "new interpreters are often sent out on jobs with little or no support; many educational interpreters work in isolation and are not typically afforded many opportunities for skill development" (Bentley-Sassaman, Houser, & Morrison, 2014, p. 45). Napier (2006) echoed this point, noting that that newly-graduated interpreters need additional support but often do not have access to it. Similarly, the respondents to Roberson et al.'s (2012) study expressed a "strong desire" (p. 66) for mentors in legal settings. A relationship with a mentor can provide much-needed professional support and guidance for interpreters.

NCIEC (2009) listed 10 elements of effective mentoring programs:

- They have a statement of purpose and a long-range plan that delineates the rationale for the program, the objectives and timeline, a needs assessment, a description of the activities, and so forth.
- There is a clear and detailed plan for recruiting mentors and mentees.
- Both mentors and mentees receive a comprehensive orientation to the program, its policies, its requirements, expectations for mentors and mentees, expected outcomes, etc.
- Both mentors and mentees are thoroughly screened to make sure they meet the program's eligibility profile.
- Both mentors and mentees participate in (separate) training to ensure that they are fully prepared to get the maximum benefit from the program. This includes training and orientation to many aspects of the program, including relationship building, roles, communication skills, and so forth.
- The strategy for matching mentors and mentees is reasoned and appropriate, and leads to the signing of a statement of understanding of the terms of the program signed by both mentor and mentee.
- There is ongoing monitoring of the mentoring program, including a structure for holding meetings, tracking assessment, and managing interpersonal issues that may arise.
- The program holds events to support and thank the participants, including an inaugural session to begin the program, peer support groups, and ongoing training and development.
- There is a process for bringing the mentorship to an end, including exit interviews and a policy for future contact between mentors/mentees.
- There is an evaluation process that allows the program to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring and shares lessons learned.

They also offered a number of detailed recommendations for mentoring program planners related to program design and planning, management, operations, and evaluation. Although these recommendations are not discussed here, the white paper is freely available online.

Gordon and Magler (2007) suggested that mentoring relationships set up through an agency or organization be formalized with an agreement or contract which describes the mentor's remit and compensation, a suggestion which perfectly aligns with the NCIEC's recommendation. In addition, a second agreement between the mentor and the mentee should outline each party's expectations and commitments in regards to the working relationship and ground to be covered during mentoring sessions. Goodman (2013) offers some helpful tools for mentors and mentees to use as they establish a framework for joint work.

Although an evaluation of the mentee's skills may be completed in connection with a mentorship arrangement (indeed, Napier, 2006, argued that a focus on skill development should always be part of an interpreting mentorship), Gordon and Magler (2007) stated that the mentor should not be involved in the evaluation process. They believed it was important for mentors and mentees to work together on equal footing, rather than in a relationship in which the mentor has power over the mentee. Formative assessment may, however, be part of the mentor's role, especially if the mentee does not begin the relationship with previously identified goals for improvement. In this light, Napier (2006) proposed six phases for interpreter mentoring:

- developing a plan for the mentorship experience,
- preparing for assignments,
- joint interpreting assignments,
- supervised interpreting assignments,
- analysis of recorded interpretations, and
- developing a portfolio.

Mentors can fill a number of roles, depending on the situation and the needs of the mentee: teacher, cheerleader, counselor, buddy, drill sergeant, and guide, among others (Gordon & Magler, 2007; see also Goodman, 2013). Gordon and Magler (2007) believed that the guide role should be the default, and the other roles be employed as necessary; they also advised mentors to exercise caution with regard to counseling, and avoid taking on a therapeutic role. The mentor-mentee relationship is expected to evolve over time as the mentee's abilities and needs change (Napier, 2006). Individuals may also have multiple mentors from multiple sources over the course of their careers, although not all of them may be part of a formal, structured program; see, for example, Whynot's (2013) discussion of her experiences with mentoring throughout her career.

Gordon and Magler (2007) listed a number of characteristics that mentors should have: supportive, patient, aware of roles and responsibilities, good communication skills, the ability to guide mentees effectively, committed to mentoring work, empathetic, and respectful. They also listed characteristics that mentees should exhibit: being eager to learn, team-oriented, patient, ready to take risks, having a positive attitude, aware of what s/he wants to get out of the mentoring experience, and committed. There are also characteristics that mentors should not have. Napier (2006) identified a number of factors involved in negative experiences of mentoring, including poor mentor–mentee match, distancing or manipulative behavior, insufficient expertise on the part of the mentor, and other dysfunction.

Although this discussion focuses on mentoring provided by practiced interpreters to less-experienced interpreters, other types of mentoring also exist. For example, Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) mentioned programs in Minnesota and New England that connect students/recent graduates with deaf mentors. Whynot (2013) highlighted the potential for deaf individuals to serve as mentors to interpreting students, and called for more mentorship opportunities to be made available to deaf interpreters. Witter-Merithew et al. (2014) discussed mentoring as a path to specialization. Malcolm and Russell (2013) proposed the concept of "co-mentoring," in which two people with equal levels of experience enter into a mentoring relationship in order to hold each other accountable in working toward professional goals, similar to Ferguson and Hardin's (2013) peer mentoring. Moreover, mentors and mentees do not necessarily have to meet face-to-face, nor be in the same geographic location. Ehrlich (2013) provided an overview of approaches and tools to facilitate mentoring at distance and offered a number of concrete recommendations for e-mentoring.

A number of practical resources are available to mentors and prospective mentors. Gordon and Magler's (2007) handbook provided many practical tools and examples for mentors. Although mentoring is often conceptualized as a process that focuses on professional practice, they suggested many activities meant to be undertaken off-the job (that is, activities equally suitable for classroom-based learning or independent skill development). Winston and Lee (2013) provided a thorough exploration of a number of issues related to mentoring and detailed descriptions of a number of mentoring programs, including sample forms/tools. The Mentoring Toolkit on the NCIEC website[22] provides a wide range of information, including sample activities, lists of references for further reading, sample memoranda of understanding for mentoring relationships, rubrics, videos, and more. The Master Mentor Program, from the Teaching Interpreter Educators and Mentors Center,[23] also contains a wealth of resources (see Winston, 2013, for a discussion of the project).

[22] http://www.interpretereducation.org/aspiring-interpreter/mentorship/mentoring-toolkit/
[23] http://www.tiem.online.tiemcenter.org/MMP%20Curriculum.pdf ; http://www.tiem.online.tiemcenter.org/

As noted above, this section ends with a description of three formal, structured mentoring programs and one mentor-training program.[24] The first formal, structured mentoring program we reviewed was reported by Pearce and Napier (2010). It was a program in Australia that matched newly-graduated sign language interpreters with mentors in a formal, semi-structured program aimed at supporting mentees as they began their professional practice. Mentors received 8 hours of training prior to beginning the program and were compensated for their time, while mentees participated in a workshop orienting them to the project and its expectations/parameters. Each mentor–mentee pair was asked to meet twice a month for the first few months, and then monthly afterwards, over the course of a calendar year. Mentors and mentees were also asked to keep journals reflecting on their work together. The project was undertaken with an action research focus and periodic assessments/check-ins, which allowed the coordinators to adjust the protocols (for example, the format for the reflective journals) throughout the program. Pearce and Napier found that each mentor–mentee pair developed its own working style and processes. Some pairs had more structured meetings, while others chatted informally; some pairs set specific goals, some didn't. The pairs also tended to use a variety of methods for communication, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and text or email messages. There tended to be a lull in activity at about the 6-month mark, after which some pairs worked together less, while others took active steps to re-energize their work together. Mentors and mentees reported benefiting from the program, and, indeed, some pairs developed relationships which continued beyond the program duration, indicating that the mentors valued the experience enough to continue it even without compensation. Mentees generally reported increased confidence at the end of the program, although Pearce and Napier noted that it was difficult to ascertain how much of that increased confidence was a result of the mentoring program and how much was the result of naturally occurring growth. In any case, Pearce and Napier emphasized that the first couple of years after graduation are of key importance to interpreters' successful professional development.

The second formal, structured mentoring program we reviewed was reported by Bentley-Sassaman et al. (2014). It was a short-term, intensive program aimed at improving interpreters' scores on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). A small group of interpreters whose EIPA scores were just under the desired level was selected to spend three weeks in a program that combined formal instruction and one-on-one mentoring, after which they re-took the EIPA. Mentors were drawn from an established pool of mentors in Pennsylvania, all of whom had previously received a 6-day training in preparation for a different, more broadly-focused mentorship program. At the start of the program, both mentors and mentees came together for a 4-day on-site session. During the mornings the

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[24] For a list of publications about other programs, readers are referred to the NCIEC (2009) white paper, and Winston and Lee (2013).

mentees participated in classwork tailored to their individual needs (identified through assessing their subscores on different parts of the EIPA), and in the afternoons they worked one-on-one with their individual mentors. After this on-site period, the mentors worked with the mentees as they completed specific, targeted homework. The groups met in person again prior to retaking the EIPA. Evaluation of the program found that mentees benefited from it, and that their EIPA scores did go up, although not all mentees increased their score to the desired benchmark.

The third formal, structured mentoring program, reported by Humphrey (2015), described her institution's integration of a mentorship/field placement program throughout its curriculum. The program consisted of progressively-structured levels which, in effect, scaffold learners' progress from observer to independent performance. In the first stage, learners were sent into the community to observe interpreters at work in real-world settings. These observations were structured: learners were required to take notes on their observation and engage in a post-observation debriefing with the interpreter about what they observed, factors that may have influenced the performance, the interpreter's decision-making, and so forth. Humphrey recommended that interpreting faculty and, where possible and appropriate, hearing and deaf participants in the observed event, also be involved in post-observation discussions. In the second level, learners were engaged in role play via simulated dialogues in the classroom. The third stage involved mentored fieldwork, in which the learner interpreted in public, in an appropriate setting and with sufficient preparation, with the support of a faculty member. The faculty member either teamed with the learner or observed/offered support. Humphrey noted that this may occur in settings where no deaf consumers are present—that is, it may be a mock assignment similar to those mentioned by Hearn and Moore (2006), and that lower-level learners should be encouraged to attend as observers. This type of mentored fieldwork allows the learner to have real-world practice with preparation, logistics, and interpreting in a low-risk setting. The final stage of the process described by Humphrey is an internship, in which learners are placed in the field and work together with a preceptor.

Finally, we reviewed a report of a mentor training program. Hearn and Moore (2006) discussed a pilot project for training mentors via distance learning technology. In this case, the mentors were charged with supervising and coaching student interpreters in an internship during which began with the interpreting students observing their mentor at work in a classroom setting (that is, the mentor was working, interpreting a class for a deaf student) and working with the mentor to get to the point of being given responsibility to interpret the class independently. The mentor training project had several goals:

- "to help mentors become more comfortable with both giving feedback on specific features of an interpretation, and with helping students explore their process,"

- for mentors “to recognize that feedback needed to go beyond sign choice and parameter errors to deeper issues in order to help students recognize patterns in their work and the likely causes of their successes or challenges,”
- “to help mentors understand where students were in their development both as learners and as interpreters, so that they could formulate realistic expectations for them,” (Hearn & Moore, 2006, p. 151).
- to make sure that mentors and learners had a shared metalanguage with which to discuss their work (i.e., to introduce mentors to theoretical approaches and terminology used in the classroom, but with which the mentors might not be familiar).

The mentor training program used the college’s pre-existing mock interpreting course (described in the Experiential Learning in Action: Examples from the Interpreting Studies Literature section of this paper). Mentors were enrolled in the online learning management system used for the course so that they could access and learn from the materials available to the students. The mentors-in-training worked through specific mentoring-related content and were awarded Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) continuing education units for their participation. Topics covered in the mentor training included adult learning theory, theory and practice of mentoring, and practice giving feedback. Although the mentors-in-training were encouraged to have contact with assigned students in the mock interpreting course, this aspect of the project did not play out as planned, and Hearn and Moore identified a need to build in more structured moments for mentor-student contact and relationship-building in any future iteration of the mentor training. The mentors-in-training also felt that the approach to practicing giving feedback was not as helpful as it could have been, since they were being asked to give sample feedback based on a video, rather than engaging in a conversation with a person about a live performance.

Field Placement

Field placement (also referred to as a practicum, internship, or supervised practice) is a critical component of interpreter education (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005), offering learners the opportunity to work for a sustained period of time with a preceptor[25] in a workplace setting, usually under the aegis of an institution of higher learning. Field placement is a common feature of training in the caring professions (Evans, 1999; McSharry & Lathlean, 2017), and is of central importance to the developing professional’s learning. Its aim, broadly speaking, is to improve skills through performance of the task being learned (i.e., professional practice)—learning to do the job better by carrying out the job itself. The goal of improvement of

[25] The term supervisor may also be used to refer to the professional who works with a student during a field placement. This usage is avoided here, however, because of the possibility of confusion with consultative supervision, which is discussed in the eponymous section of this document.

professional practice is significant in that it “requires an emphasis on supervision and accountability, and not just on teaching and learning” (Evans, 1999, p. 4).

Evans (1999) pointed out “a common misconception is that learning takes place in the higher education institution and is ‘put into practice’ in the practice agency,” but that in fact, much learning does take place during the field placement, “often as much as in the higher education institution and sometimes more, depending on the profession to be learned and the individual learner” (p. xvi). Academic settings (i.e., school learning) tend to focus on covering a specific range of content, but learning in the field, where the content encountered may not be predictable nor susceptible to control (although the learner’s interaction with it may be structured to some extent) is generally more focused on processes (Evans, 1999, p. 5-6). One benefit of field placement, in Evans’s view, is that it allows for reflection on and discussion of an event in close temporal proximity to the event itself, thus promoting learning from the experience; it also provides an opportunity for learners to make connections between concrete events and abstract concepts, an issue to which we return below.

Institutions of higher learning and placement sites must work together to set clear expectations for the placement experience, including workplace requirements such as ID badges, background checks, or vaccinations, as well as learning goals, expectations for work load and job responsibilities, and assessment (Evans, 1999). Leeson, Calle Alberdi, and Bown (2013) stated that the institution of higher learning is the point of contact for “communication, documentation, induction, maintenance, evaluation and the processes of insurance, health and safety, risk assessment and quality control” (p. 35). When field placement is a part of a larger educational program, the institution organizing the placement must have resources to support the placement portion of the program, including administrative support, and dedicated time for educators to develop relationships with placement sites, and organize and supervise placements. Leeson et al. went on to highlight the institution of higher learning’s responsibility to properly equip preceptors for their work:

> ideally, higher education institution (HIE) educators and placement site supervisors will hold the same level of qualification….and experience. However, the reality is that this may not always be the case. Where this occurs, then the HIE has the responsibility to ensure that placement site supervisors receive induction and training as to the requirements, responsibilities and standards expected of them. They should also be kept in close contact with the HIE during the placement period. (2013, p. 34-35).

Evans (1999) also highlighted the need for placement sites and organizing institutions to clearly outline shared goals and to have a joint commitment to critical, reflective practice during the placement. He stressed the need to train preceptors in reflective methods.

Placement can involve a structured curriculum that takes into account the realities of the placement format; this curriculum is likely developed in concert with the institution of higher learning that has placed the learner, and should take into account learners' skill development over time (that is, progression should be built in) (Evans, 1999). Nevertheless, what and how much is learned during field placement partly depends on the culture of the site and its readiness to work with learners. A reflective, collaborative workplace culture with open lines of communication is more conducive to learning; it is also important that the preceptors assigned to work with learners have ample reserved time to spend engaged with the learner, rather than being overloaded with job duties (Evans, 1999; McSharry & Lathlean, 2017).

Given the fact that most learners will only experience one or two field placements, the quality of the placement experience is an important concern. Learners will be best served when the curriculum of the interpreter education program has adequately prepared them for the placement setting. Otherwise, learners may not be able to take full advantage of the placement opportunity and may experience a disconnect of the sort reported by an interpreter quoted in Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005), whose program had focused principally on community interpreting but whose only options for field placement were in educational settings, for which she felt the program had not prepared her. Besides congruity between the academic curriculum and the placement opportunities, Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) identified two additional concerns about placement voiced by students: a desire to be exposed to a broader array of settings during placement courses, and a desire to be exposed to a broader variety of deaf consumers. In general, they found that learners are sensitive to the fact that they may leave the educational program without having attained the necessary level of skill, and that increased or expanded placement opportunities are an important factor in developing their skills.

Bown (2013) identified a number of issues to consider in matching learners with field placement sites. Educators should take into account the learner's capabilities, geographical location preference, career plans (i.e., areas of interest), prior experience and knowledge, and other considerations such as financial resources and mobility. Educators must also consider their own knowledge of the placement site, its staff, its policies, and so forth in order to appropriately match learners to placement sites.

Although the preceptor is partly responsible for assessing learning, when the field placement takes place through an institution of higher learning the institution's faculty is primarily responsible for assessment (Leeson et al., 2013). Evans (1999) highlighted the validity of assessment of learners' performance during field placement settings (specifically when they take the form of reflective apprenticeship, described below), given the fact that they are engaged in real-world tasks. Methods for assessing learning during placement may include journals, portfolios, feedback from consumers and/or the preceptor, site visits, evidence of

exposure to certain types of settings/activities, completion of community project, or oral exams (Leeson et al., 2013). Leeson et al. (2013) recommended that faculty engage learners in reflection and discussion about the placement activities and review learners' reflective written work periodically. They also recommended that faculty and learners meet frequently (every 2-3 weeks) "to discuss the learning experiences, review and provide written and verbal feedback on submitted reflective written work and check progress against the overall module/unit learning and assessment outcome requirements" (Leeson et al., 2013, p. 35-36).

Given the goals of reflective writing—learning, critical thinking, engaging deeply with one's experience—there is a tension inherent in using placement journals (or, indeed, any reflective writing) as the basis for assessment. Bown (2013) noted that learners may feel inhibited in their writing by the knowledge that it will be assessed, or may write with an eye toward pleasing the person who will be evaluating their work. In order to mitigate this issue, Bown suggested distinguishing between two distinct readers of the placement journal: 1) the representative of the institution of higher learning (i.e., faculty), who grades the work, and 2), the preceptor, who does not give a grade but does engage in dialogue with the learner about the issues discussed in the journal. This allows the preceptor and learner to develop a more equal relationship in which the preceptor can serve as a guide and coach. Additionally, learners do not submit all their journals for assessment; rather, they select some portion of their journaling as the material to be graded. This allows the learner more power in deciding what to present as representative samples of his/her work.

Bown (2013) provided an example of a set of learning goals for student interpreters completing a field placement:

- Implement effective methods of procedure in interpreting, using effective coping strategies for the domain and utilizing appropriate preparation requirements.
- Be able to understand and produce cohesive concepts while demonstrating diversity in both first and second language that skillfully reflects and conveys the source/target message.
- Function professionally and ethically within the working constraints related to different settings and participants.
- Utilizing reflective practice, conduct written and spoken diagnostic analyses of an interpreter's performance identifying the impact and outcome upon domain participants, possible alternative strategies, and the continuing professional development needs of interpreting practitioners (self and others). (p. 57–58)

Preceptors play an important role in the placement experience, as described by McSharry and Lathlean (2017) in the context of nurse education: "The preceptor takes responsibility for students' learning, acting as a teacher and guide. Preceptors set objectives, provide learning opportunities for students, assist them to learn the practice of nursing, give regular feedback

and evaluate students' performance" (p. 73). As McSharry and Lathlean pointed out, socialization into a role via supervised professional practice has the potential to be a positive or negative experience for learners. Careful identification of preceptors is therefore of central importance, as is clearly outlining expectations, roles and responsibilities and providing training about precepting.

In their study of student nurses' clinical training with preceptors, McSharry and Lathlean (2017) found that the opportunity to work in a sustained fashion with one preceptor over a period of time was beneficial and allowed the dyad to develop a trusting relationship; this point parallels Evans's (1999) observation that preceptors and learners generally have more opportunity than teacher/student dyads in academia in which to engage in one-to-one dialogue about the learner's performance and needs. At the same time, both preceptors and learners in McSharry and Lathlean's study expressed concern about a lack of sufficient time to dig deeply into or fully explore concepts, noting "students' learning is often compromised as a result of preceptor workload" (2017, p. 76). The study found that preceptors engaged in a number of strategies that promoted learning: scaffolding tasks for learners, helping them engage in anticipatory planning in advance of a task, asking questions to get learners to engage deeply with a subject/issue, and reflecting on their professional reasoning or judgment.

Evans (1999) cautioned against designating specific tasks or work as "student tasks," as this can silo learners and inhibit growth. Instead, he urged evaluating and re-evaluating learners' abilities and allowing them to take increasing responsibility and confront bigger challenges over time (1999, p. 48-49). Bown (2013) also suggested planning placements in such a way that a learner must develop a relationship with multiple preceptors over the course in order to expose the learner to a variety of ways of working, approaching problems, and making decisions. Although learners may resist this type of arrangement because of the need to "deal with a range of practitioners' views, when at times they will just want to be presented with one solution and a fixed way of 'doing things'" (Bown, 2013, p. 59), it benefits their critical-thinking and decision-making skills. The designated preceptor need not be the only person from whom the learner learns—other individuals at the placement site can (and should) be drawn on as resources for the learner. Evans stressed that in talking about practice teachers (his term for the person in charge of a field placement) he is referring to "all members of staff in the practice setting who consciously take it upon themselves to help the student learn about the practice experience" (1999, p. 37). Although interpreting students may be placed at sites where the only qualified interpreter available is their preceptor, they can be encouraged to view all those who work in the site as resources for learning. This relates to Kinnunen's (2011) description of translators' and interpreters' work as "necessary action in a larger activity system" (p. 95), which emphasized that work is carried out within the context of other professions or systems

(i.e., judicial, educational, medical, etc.). Professionals working in those settings could also been seen as a resource.

Evans (1999) proposed that field placement learning take place within a model of reflective apprenticeship, consisting of the following components:

- direct access to practice performance in the practice setting
- as part of a one-to-one relationship between student and practice teacher [i.e., preceptor/mentor],
- which is developed over time
- and moderated by mutual agreement
- and which encourages reflective learning about that performance. (1999, p. 140)

This approach coheres well with Lave and Wenger's (1991) description of situated learning as a process of legitimate peripheral participation, whereby a learner is accepted as a part of the community of practice and, through the learning process, gradually becomes a full member of the community. Evans compared this reflective apprenticeship model with the craft and trades apprenticeship model, noting that the principal difference in the reflective apprenticeship model is the focus on reflection and dialogue between the preceptor and the learner, which he saw as mitigating against potential negative consequences of such a relationship. Another significant difference is that reflective apprenticeship forms only a portion of the professional's education, rather than the whole of it, as was historically true for craft and trade apprenticeships. The learner also enters the placement on a temporary basis and is clearly identified as a learner, rather than a permanent member of the workplace personnel.

Learner–preceptor interaction may take three forms, according to Evans (1999): the learner observes while the preceptor performs job tasks, the learner performs job tasks while the preceptor observes, or the learner and the preceptor perform together. All three of these forms are valid and beneficial at different moments and under different circumstances. The first case, in which the learner observes the preceptor at work, allows the learner the opportunity to see, analyze, and later discuss a model performance; it also allows the preceptor to explicate his/her own preparation for the task; reflect on during-task reasoning, judgment, and processes; and model self-assessment and self-reflection for the learner. In the second case, the preceptor has the opportunity to guide a learner in pre-task preparation, see first-hand the learner's performance, and provide feedback on the performance.

Evans noted that the third option—joint performance—is difficult to carry out in many contexts, but this is not as much the case in interpreting. In many circumstances it is quite feasible for the learner and the preceptor to team, assuming that the learner is at an appropriate stage of skill development and has had adequate preparation; in fact, Hoza (2013) argued for team interpreting as a productive environment for mentoring. Joint performance

may be especially useful for reducing the power differential between preceptor and learner and for increasing leaners' confidence. When the preceptor and learner are performing together, Evans urged preceptors to suggest strategies to learners rather than acting to solve difficulties for the learner, as this is more empowering and also allows the learner to act autonomously. Whichever of these three methods is employed at a given moment, the learner/preceptor duo should engage in a four-stage process: "Discussion *before* interaction with the client(s), interaction with client(s), time-out, and discussion *after* interaction with client(s)" (Evans, 1999, p. 150). Evans also emphasized the importance to both learners and preceptors of establishing a good working relationship, having open lines of communication, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations. For further discussion of interactions between preceptors and learners, refer to the Consultative Supervision (next) and Providing Feedback sections of this paper.

Consultative Supervision

New graduates and established professionals in many practice professions (defined as "those which employ the knowledge and skills of that occupation in a dynamic, interpersonal context," Dean & Pollard, 2009, p. 2), such as social work, psychology and nursing, routinely enter into a supervision relationship with a more-experienced professional (Dean & Pollard, 2013; Evans, 1999; Hetherington, 2012). Clinical or consultative supervision commonly takes place as part of a formal placement or internship that is part of the learner's academic preparation for the profession, but it is not limited to this type of arrangement. In fact, Dean and Pollard (2013) argued that all interpreters should be required to complete a certain number of hours of supervision after graduation and before certification.

Hetherington (2012), referencing the British Department of Health, provided a definition of this type of supervision:

> Supervision is a formal process of professional support and learning which enables individual practitioners to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance consumer protection and the safety of care in complex clinical situations. It is central to the process of learning and to the expansion of the scope of practice and should be seen as a means of encouraging self-assessment and analytical and reflective skills. (p. 47-48)

In their textbook on the demand control schema, Dean and Pollard (2013) described what this type of supervision is not:

> Supervision in this context does not mean that someone is assigned to watch over you and your work. It also does not necessarily refer to any person(s) who holds managerial

> responsibility over you. Supervision in this context is broader, more abstract, and distinct from the concepts of oversight or management. (p. 143)

As this description implies, supervision is a process that occurs between two professionals, both of whom bring experience and knowledge to the table. Although the supervisor has more experience and knowledge, she or he is there to guide the emerging professional in a joint process of exploration and reflection (Evans, 1999). Hetherington (2012) identified three principal functions of supervision: 1) developmental—fostering skill development; 2) resourcing—helping the supervisee analyze and cope with emotional responses; and 3) qualitative—supporting provision of high-quality services. The first years of professional practice are challenging, and supervision serves as an important form of support as new professionals begin to apply "the technical knowledge and skills they gained through their educational program to real-world practice situations" (Dean & Pollard, 2013, p. 145). The supervisor's role is not necessarily to give answers or tell fledgling practitioners what to do; rather, the supervisor helps "the supervisee develop their own judgment about how to handle issues that arise during professional practice" (Dean & Pollard, 2013, p. 145).

Another important aspect of supervision is that it provides an opportunity for professionals to process the emotions that their work evokes in them (Dean & Pollard, 2013). The fact that interpreters can and do suffer from vicarious trauma and occupational stress reinforces the need for them to be taught to engage in self-care and positive coping strategies, and is well-documented in the literature (Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012; Crezee et al., 2015; Harvey, 2015; Lai, Heydon, & Mulaim, 2015). Dean and Pollard (2013) cautioned that supervision is not an appropriate venue for psychotherapy or venting; rather, it involves talking about one's experiences (including emotions) in a "structured, concise way" (p. 146). Harvey (2015) argued that the opportunity to verbalize feelings of trauma or distress suffered while interpreting can be beneficial:

> articulating and examining one's reactions with another person who seeks to understand one's reactions and validate one's feelings often renders the detrimental effects of the vicarious trauma less emotionally toxic. This facilitates insight that users in the use of coping or self-care strategies, such as various physical safeguards, self-soothing activities, limit setting, social supports, organizational supports, and access to psychotherapy. (p. 11)

Harvey (2015) suggested a number of scaffolding questions which may be employed in the process of helping interpreters to examine and benefit from distressing or traumatic experiences.

Although supervision can be problem-focused, it is not necessarily so. Supervision sessions should occur regularly whether or not the supervisee has a specific issue to discuss, as highlighted by Hetherington (2012):

> Topics for discussion can evolve from discussion within supervision and are not always formulated in advance. In supervision groups, an issue raised by one member may trigger something for another, which then becomes their issue for the session. The process of supervision itself may also identify issues that may otherwise go unrecognized by the supervisee. (p. 53)

As Hetherington made clear, while supervision may take place in dyads (i.e., supervisor–supervisee), it may also take place in groups, thus exposing participants to different perspectives and approaches.

Dean and Pollard (2013) recommended having more than one supervisor over the course of one's career. Hetherington (2012) cautioned against forming supervision relationships between friends or close colleagues, as they may not be willing or able to engage as critically as a person with whom there is no pre-existing personal relationship. Evans (1999), however, urged supervisors and supervisees to develop genuine relationships which may, on occasion, continue as friendships after the supervision relationship ends.

One example of a structured program providing consultative supervision to interpreters was described by Witter-Merithew et al. (2014): a program of supervised field induction for ASL interpreters seeking to specialize in legal or medical interpreting. One important aspect of this program was providing supervisors with relevant training before beginning their work with their supervisees. Another significant aspect was the requirement that program participants were certified and had experience, since the focus was on specialization rather than on developing the skills of student or newly-graduated interpreters. For further discussion of educator–learner relationships and of feedback in field settings, see the Relationships and the Learning Climate and Providing Feedback sections of this paper.

Connecting Theory and Practice in Field Placements and Mentorships

Noting that *theory* is a broad concept which is not always well defined or understood, Evans (1999) identified three important aspects of theory: "a theory contains more than one idea, the ideas are interrelated, and…the theory offers an explanation as well as a description of the phenomena" (p. 85). When we discuss linking theory and practice, we are sometimes talking about theory in this sense, but other times we are using the term to encompass things which are not strictly theory, such as models or abstract ideas. Evans (1999) noted that although many learners (and practitioners, and even educators) may be resistant to theory, viewing it as remote and not relevant to practice, they will often change their opinion when they see

evidence of its usefulness and/or applicability in real-life settings. For this reason, field-based educators have an important role to play in helping learners productively link theory and practice. As Evans (1999) put it, although “academic teachers may articulate the theory with considerable clarity, the practice teacher can demonstrate its effectiveness: the proof of the pudding is in the eating!” (p. 99).

In order to carry out this role, field-based educators must first actively reflect on the place and importance of theory, models, and/or abstract concepts in their own practice and identify moments/situations in which a given theory, model, or concept has been relevant to them and/or impacted their practice. Field-based educators are also well-advised to acquaint themselves with the theoretical frameworks and approaches that learners have been exposed to in their institutions of higher learning in order to be able to draw on them in their discussions with learners (Evans, 1999; see also Hearn & Moore, 2006, regarding the need for mentors and learners to have a shared metalanguage.) Educators are also urged to have theoretical literature readily to hand so as to refer to it or share it with learners at the time it is discussed or becomes relevant to practice.

Evans (1999) also stated that discussions among a group of learners are an especially fertile ground for linking theory and practice. Learners may be more willing to learn from each other than from an authority figure. Additionally, the effort of processing and engaging with other learners’ experiences and perspectives requires learners to engage in some level of abstract thinking, which naturally lends itself to discussing theoretical concepts and their relationship with the experiences being discussed.

When discussing theory and practice, Evans (1999) recommended starting from concrete events and moving to theory; that is, rather than introducing a concept, model or theoretical framework and then the (potential) situations in which it could apply, the experience itself should be the catalyst for introducing a relevant framework. Kurtz et al. (2005) suggested two tactics for initiating this process:

- Ask the learner(s) for permission to generalize and/or to introduce abstract content related to their current discussion. For example, “are you aware of what scholar X says about topic Y? Would you like to know?”
- Assign the learner(s) the task of finding scholarly literature that they consider relevant to their experience and reporting on that literature (whether to a group of peers or to another audience).

Evans (1999) reminds us that educators based in the academic setting also have a key role to play in this process, especially insofar as they are able to take a more detached view of the field setting. In situations where the learner(s) have access both to a field-based and an academia-based educator, the educators should ideally work together so that the learner has a well-

rounded experience that draws on the contributions and strengths of both classes of educator. Indeed, he urged classroom- and field-based educators[26] to collaborate with each other closely in order to maximize learning and to facilitate learners' ability to link their field-based experiences and their book learning.

Assessment

What is Assessment?

Assessment is a key area of concern for educators, as attested by the many publications on the subject, both in general and specific to interpreting. This paper does not undertake an in-depth overview or recommendations for assessment of experiential learning. This section highlights some issues and questions related to assessment in the hope of guiding readers toward further inquiry related to their own context and needs.

Walvoord defined assessment as "the systematic gathering of information about student learning and the factors that affect learning, undertaken with the resources, time and expertise available for the purpose of improving learning" (as cited in Qualters, 2010b, p. 55). Leeson (2011) painted a vivid picture of assessment of signed language interpreters (both students and practitioners):

> Assessment…is fraught with concern about fitness to practice, the competencies required to interpret effectively in a broad range of settings, idealized notions of desired competence versus minimal skill levels required to undertake the task at hand, as well as issues relating to language teaching, language status, and societal attitudes toward deaf communities and signed languages. Yet, many trainers of interpreters and many of those engaged in the assessment of interpreter quality have never had any formal training in applied linguistics generally, or specifically, in the area of language testing. (p. 153)

According to Qualters (2010c), assessment of experiential learning activities sponsored by institutions of higher learning is often lacking. Evans (1999) made a similar point, noting that research into outcomes of field placement is often more focused on the learners' and educators' satisfaction than on the actual learning that occurred; he also noted the possibility of overstating the role of academic institutions in learning while understating the role of field placement. Qualters (2010c) urged institutions that sponsor experiential learning programs to

[26] Evans (1999) also noted that some educators may combine the roles of field-based and classroom-based educator in one person. Given the large number of interpreters who divide their working hours between teaching in institutions of higher learning and working in the field, it seems likely that such dual-role educators may be found in the world of interpreting education.

do more assessment, and to move beyond measurement of outcomes. She also made an important distinction between assessment of programs and assessment of individual students' learning. Although the question of program assessment is an important one, our focus here is on assessment of individual students.

Assessment of learning is a fundamental force in education in general, as Kurtz et al. noted "what is assessed gets taught and learned" (2005, p. 253). Assessment is a motivating factor for students (if you will be assessed on a topic, you are motivated to learn about it) and establishes the legitimacy of a given object of study both with learners (if a topic area or skill is not assessed, it appears unimportant) and within academe (a topic or skill that is assessed is more readily accepted as legitimate) (Kurtz et al., 2005). At the same time, Winston (2005) warned against conflating assessment and grading. For her part, Taylor stressed that "authentic assessments focus on the demonstration of functional skills" (2013, p. 10). Leeson et al. (2013) listed several purposes of assessment: it allows educators to gain insight into learners' progress; it can also serve as a motivating factor for learners; and it provides a basis for an institution to allow or disallow learners' progress through a course of study. Assessment may be achievement-oriented, in which a learner's progress is judged in comparison with the learner's prior performance, or proficiency/criteria-oriented, in which a learner's ability to do something is judged (Leeson et al., 2013).

Evans (1999) identified three issues underlying assessment of student learning:

- Clarity of purpose: is the purpose to increase/guide/evaluate student learning, or is it to determine inclusion/exclusion from a group or profession (for example, to pass or fail a learner, thus allowing/disallowing their progress to the next level of a program or profession)? Evans noted that these two purposes are not easily separated, but that the distinction is an important one.
- Clarity of process: details of assessment must be made clear to the learners, who need to know "what is expected of them in terms of the dimensions and the processes of assessment, who will make the decisions about their practice standards and how they can legitimately influence those decisions" (p. 182). Such details also need to be clear to the educators carrying out the assessment.
- Learner empowerment: when possible, offer options (for example, in field placements) such as flexibility in terms of evidence of learning (for example, by having learners select material to include in portfolios), allowing learners to respond to assessments (especially when being assessed for performance in a field placement), and providing sufficient support services for learners.

Assessment of learners is generally classified as either formative or summative (Kurtz et al., 2005). Formative assessment is "informal, ongoing assessment that is an integral part of the teaching and learning process," and summative assessment "occurs at preordained critical points and determines which learners move forward, which require further work and ultimately

which pass and fail" (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 254). Winston (2005) emphasized the need to provide opportunities for learners to learn from assessment, whether formative or summative:

> Simply telling students what is or is not working through one-way diagnostic work is not enough. The purpose of education is defeated when students are given activities that are graded by the teacher but are not given the opportunity to learn from and through the assessment. (p. 230-231)

Assessment Design and Method

Kurtz et al. (2005) made a number of recommendations for educators designing assessments. They recommended starting out by clarifying what the assessment is assessing:

- "knowledge—do you know it?
- competence—can you show it?
- performance—do you (choose to) do it?
- outcomes—what results do you obtain from using it?" (p. 257).

and, subsequently, determining what types of skills will be evaluated. Educators should be also attentive to multiple facets of learning, keeping in mind that learning can involve change in behavior, cognition, and affect (Evans, 1999). Assessment, in Kurtz et al.'s view, should channel "students' learning appropriately and positively [influence] not only what but also how students learn. In other words, the assessment must be congruent in both content and approach with the curriculum itself and thereby reinforce desirable learning behaviours" (p. 261).

Evans (1999) recommended the use of multiple assessment methods, noting that the assessment may be considered more reliable when evaluations of the learners' performance are consistent across methods. Use of multiple methods has a number of other benefits, as described by Hayward:

- It allows for a greater range of abilities to be demonstrated and rewarded.
- It creates less strain and anxiety and allows greater freedom to experiment.
- Students seem to perform differently at different tasks.
- Students can develop their own tailor-made learning and work habits. (as cited in Evans, 1999, p. 205)

The methods for evaluating learners in field placements mentioned by Evans (1999) include:

- Practice outcomes, that is, evaluating the outcomes (i.e., the product) of on-site work done by the learner. Evans recommended asking the learner to assess outcomes first, and providing the preceptor's evaluation as a response.
- Self-assessment, which allows learners to develop their ability to reflect on their work/learning

- Practice portfolios, which include a collection of documents or other evidence produced by the learner during the period being assessed (which may range from a single course or field placement to a whole program of study), a reflection on the evidence being submitted, and some indication of how the evidence and reflection correspond with or reflect accomplishment of a set of criteria.[27]

In designing interpreting tests, Leeson et al. (2013) highlighted the wide variety of forms that can be employed and the wide variety of skills that may be assessed, and suggested:

> Given such complexity—coupled with established best practice requirements for transparency, it is advisable for trainers to work with a marking rubric, that is, a rating form which lists the categories rated in a given test, along with clear rating scales that have been tried and tested and deemed reliable in advance. (p. 26)

Leeson et al. provided a number of sample rubrics in an appendix.

Kurtz et al. (2005) described three continua along which rating scales or checklists forms can fall:

- Quantitative–Qualitative
- Evaluative feedback–Descriptive feedback
- Number scores, good/bad–"Here's what I see"

They described the left-hand side of these continua as more global, and the right-hand side as more detailed. They described the globally-focused (i.e., on the left-hand side of the continua) as simple to use, but "difficult for examiners and learners to interpret and learn from and potentially subjective," and therefore preferred assessment tools that fall toward the right-hand side of the continua and have space for evaluators to add comments. They also recommended that the same feedback forms be used for summative and formative assessments, in order to increase transparency and make expectations clear to learners from the outset. They noted that detailed checklists have been suggested as more effective for novices, and that some scholars argued for the use of global ratings, especially for experienced learners, on the basis that checklists may tend to reward completeness rather than competence and may

> artificially constrain the domains of competence being tested toward simple tasks that can be observed but which may not reflect the complexity of medical tasks, and may therefore not include higher components of clinical competence such as empathy, rapport and ethics. (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 270)

[27] See Humphrey (2000), Leeson et al. (2013), and Winston (2005) for discussion of portfolios in interpreter education. See the section of this paper titled "Field Placement" for further discussion of assessment of learning in field placements.

Kurtz et al. (2005) wrote specifically about assessment of medical students, but their point is relevant in the context of assessing interpreting, which is also a complex, dynamic, and demanding task involving interacting with other human beings. In connection with discussions of the reliability and validity of assessment instruments, they stressed the need to properly train raters in the use of the instrument, noting that in the case of objective structured clinical examinations (a commonly-used assessment for medical students), examiner training "has been shown to be far more important than marking grid design" (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 271).

One tool for assessing learners' depth of reflection is the 6-point pedagogical thinking scale, which identifies six levels of reflection/thinking that may be exhibited by learners:

- 1—Nonjudgmental report/description of events/supervisor's comments
- 2—Judgmental report/description of events/problem/supervisor's comments/personal suggestions for future action with no reasons or justification/rationale given
- 3—Descriptions/explanations of events/problems/personal suggestions for future actions with traditional/personal preferences given as reason/justification/rationale
- 4—Description/explanation with principle or theory given as reason/justification/rationale
- 5—Description/explanation with principle/theory and consideration of contextual factors given as reason/justification/rationale
- 6—Description/explanation with consideration of ethical, moral, and political issues. (Qualters, 2010c, p. 98)

Transparency and fairness are important principles to consider when designing assessments. Recommendations along these lines include using multiple forms of assessment, allowing learners to have experience with an assessment tool/method (i.e., receive formative assessment) before using that tool/method for summative assessment; giving learners access to the rubric or scales used for assessment; considering anonymized assessment (i.e., the assessor does not know the identity of the person being assessed); and ensuring that assessments are reliable and valid (Leeson et al., 2013). The importance of using assessments that are familiar (in form, method, etc.) to learners is worth highlighting here: the goal is to assess the learner's performance on the task being assessed, not the learner's ability to navigate the method or format. Educators are urged to employ the types of tasks that learners will be asked to do during assessments throughout the learning activity so as to familiarize the learner.

In the context of ASL interpreter education, educators are further reminded of the importance of ensuring representation of diverse perspectives in the assessment process (Humphrey, 2000; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2005; Williams, 2017)—including not just program faculty and staff, but community members representing a variety of user perspectives on interpreting services. This is helpful for mitigating the distance between the community and the process of

selecting and training interpreters caused by the increased academization of interpreter education. It also builds connections between interpreter training and users of interpreter services.

The Educator in Experiential Learning

Interpreter educators are charged with accompanying and guiding learners at every stage of pre-service training and professional development, but in order to carry out this work they need to be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge. Cox (2013) noted that educators do not automatically know how to teach, and argued that educators need to learn about learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning. On a similar note, D'Hayer (2006) stressed that it is not enough for interpreter educators to know about interpreting theory and skill acquisition—they must also be knowledgeable about pedagogy of interpreting and have "strong teaching skills" (p. 68). Winston (2005) added that "interpreting educators need to learn how to structure, implement, and assess active learning approaches that will lead to active learning by their students, and, therefore, to competent interpreting" (p. 208). To this end, this section describes the role of the educator in experiential learning and discusses two important issues for educators: establishing relationships with learners and providing feedback. Throughout this review we use the term "educator" generically to refer to anyone engaged with a learner in a learning process, in any setting, and at any stage of training or professional development. Before continuing with this section, however, we touch briefly on the subject of nomenclature.

Beard and Wilson (2013) drew on the Association for Experiential Educators' definitions of *trainer* and *facilitator* to differentiate between the two roles:

> A facilitator is an "individual responsible for managing the learning environment to assist individuals/groups to achieve value from the learning process" ... a trainer is said to be "a practitioner who leads and directs prescribed learning for skill development, towards measurable explicit results." (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 55)

In less-structured learning environments, the person working with a learner is often called a *coach* or a *mentor*. Coaching and mentoring often take place on the job and involve a more-experienced person working with a less-experienced person to develop their job-related skills (Beard & Wilson, 2013). They are closely related concepts, although coaching is generally time-limited and goal-directed, focusing on a specific skill or area, and mentoring takes place over a longer period of time and does not necessarily involve working toward improving a specific skill or reaching a specific goal (Beard & Wilson, 2013).

The Educator's Role in Learner-Centered Learning

Kolb (2015) stated that "educating is not something one does *to* students through implementation of a set of techniques. Rather, it is something educators do *with* learners in the context of meaningful relationships and shared experiences" (p. 300). Experiential learning thus places the learner, rather than the educator, at the center of the learning process. As Winston (2005) remarked, the focus is on learning, not on teaching.

Taking a learner-centered or experiential approach to learning does not, however, mean that the educator is an unimportant figure. Educators are still responsible for imparting knowledge, in addition to establishing a positive learning environment and guiding the learning process. The interpreter educators interviewed by Cox (2013) highlighted the need for educators to develop good educator–learner relationships, establish a psychologically safe learning environment, and adapt to learners' needs. The educator's role in the learning process is mutable, shifting to respond to learners' needs and their progression through the learning cycle (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Evans, 1999; Kolb, 2015).

Cox (2013) stated that the primary differences between educator-centered and learner-centered learning environments are rooted in the educator's role, the locus of control in the learning environment, methods of instruction, and the psychological environment. The educators interviewed in his study mentioned a number of educator behaviors they consider integral to learner-centered teaching:

- Relationship-building
- Working together collaboratively with learners
- Establishing a safe learning environment
- Creating a culture in which making mistakes is seen as part of the learning process (rather than as something negative)
- Encouraging learners
- Adapting to learners' needs
- Making opportunities for learners to learn together
- Viewing educators as learners in their own right

Cox (2013) went on to note three aspects of deaf culture and ASL-interpreter-education culture that, in his view, facilitate a learner-centered approach: the need to make eye contact with another individual in order to communicate in ASL; the custom of addressing educators by their first names, which acts as a leveler between educators and learners; and the fact that Deaf culture is by nature collectivist.

Kolb (2015) proposed four educator roles, one for each stage of the learning cycle (see Kolb, Figure 7.22 Educator Roles and the Learning Cycle, p. 303), and suggested appropriate educator actions or behaviors for each role:

- *The Facilitator Role.* When facilitating, educators help learners get in touch with their personal experience and reflect on it. They adopt a warm affirming style to draw out learners' interests, intrinsic motivation, and self-knowledge. They often do this by facilitating conversation in small groups. They create personal relationships with learners.
- *The Expert Role.* In their role as subject expert, educators help learners organize and connect their reflections to the knowledge base of the subject matter. They adopt an authoritative, reflective style. They often teach by example, modeling and encouraging critical thinking as they systematically organize and analyze the subject matter knowledge. This knowledge is often communicated through lectures and texts.
- *The Evaluator Role.* As a standard setter and evaluator, educators help learners master the application of knowledge and skill in order to meet performance requirements. They adopt an objective, results-oriented style as they set the knowledge requirements needed for quality performance. They create performance activities for learners to evaluate their learning.
- *The Coaching Role.* In the coaching role, educators help learners apply knowledge to achieve their goals. They adopt a collaborative, encouraging style, often working one-on-one with individuals to help them learn from experiences in their life context. They assist in the creation of professional development plans and provide ways of getting feedback on performance. (Kolb, 2015, p. 304).

Although one educator may manifest all of these roles, shifting from one to the other as needed, it is also possible that in specific settings or circumstances an individual educator might engage in one or a couple of the roles, or that different people could fulfill different but complementary roles for the same learner(s). Educators have preferred styles, just as learners do, and thus may tend to inhabit one (or more) role(s) more often than others. Kolb (2015) suggested that educators work to increase their flexibility so as to be able to take on the characteristics of all of the roles, to a greater or lesser extent. Evans (1999) also suggested the value of educators' beginning with a style that the learner is comfortable with and then later having the student stretch to accommodate less-familiar or less-preferred styles, although Brown et al. (2014) argued that empirical studies on learning styles indicate that a good fit between the subject being taught and the mode of instruction is more important than the fit between the mode of instruction and the individual learner's preferred learning style.

Evans (1999) described four facets of educators' responsibilities to learner(s) and two facets of their responsibilities to themselves:

- Enabling: providing support for learners during the beginning stages of the field placement, including ensuring that learners are comfortable with the site and empowering them to participate in the placement environment and take charge of their own learning.
- Teaching: this may include teaching in the traditional sense of imparting information or giving directions (i.e., doing something to the learner), as well as encouraging students

to search out new knowledge or information for themselves or providing appropriate opportunities for practice (i.e., helping the learner do something). In this connection, Evans urged educators not to be afraid of making mistakes or admitting their own lack knowledge—to give themselves "permission ... not to know all the answers" (1999, p. 148).
- Assessing: evaluating learners' performance.
- Taking accountability: both for the learner's performance of their duties (i.e., the services provided to clients by the learner) and for supplying the learner with appropriate learning experiences, supervision, and feedback.
- Critical reflection: evaluation of one's own work as an educator and ongoing development of one's skills. This should include reviewing comments from learners' evaluations of one's performance as an educator and incorporating feedback.
- Self-care: identify sources of emotional support for one's work as an educator, and draw on them regularly.

Although Evans (1999) wrote specifically about educators involved in field placements, the identified functions seem congruent with other settings as well. Evans also noted two further functions of educators involved in field placements: they may also responsible for organizing site placements for learners and for identifying opportunities for experiences within sites where learners may work with multiple on-site supervisors or mentors.

Another way of looking at what educators in experiential learning settings do was outlined by Beard and Wilson (2013). Drawing on McLeod's typology of therapeutic interventions, Beard and Wilson suggested various functions available to educators:

- Expressing support, approval, or reassurance to the learner(s)
- Providing information (data, facts, resources)
- Giving advice or guidance
- Asking closed-ended questions to get more information from the learner(s)
- Asking open-ended questions to explore a topic with the learner(s)
- Repeating information shared with the educator back to the learner(s) (i.e., paraphrasing what another person has expressed) for confirmation or validation
- Responding to the learner(s) contribution in a way that makes new connections, adds information, analyzes, identifies patterns, etc.[28]
- Pointing out discrepancies or issues in the learner(s) statements, behaviors, assumptions, etc.
- Disclosing information about the educator's experiences or feelings. (2013, p. 60)

One last function of the educator to guide students' development was illustrated by Kolb (2015): "One's job as an educator is not only to implant new ideas but also to dispose of or modify old ones" (p. 39); and Kurtz et al. (2005): "While experience may be an excellent

[28] Note: the original term for this action was *interpretation*, but to avoid confusion with the field of interpreting, which is the focus of this paper, we are not using that term here.

reinforcer of habits, it tends not to discern between good and bad habits” (p. 21). Building on the learners’ prior knowledge and experience is one of the characteristics of experiential learning discussed in the literature, but, as this pair of quotations highlights, prior experience and knowledge may be faulty or incomplete. In such cases the educator is responsible for guiding learners toward better understanding or performance.

Kurtz et al. (2005) also provided some useful perspective on the educator’s role, highlighting the need for flexibility as well as the need for educators to serve as expert guides for learners:

> Going beyond specific skills into individuality is the real challenge of experiential learning. We cannot be prescriptive about the best way to proceed in any circumstance. Many variables influence the choices that are best in a given situations, including the development of your own personal style. But we must also recognize that we can put forward certain reliable patterns and principles of communication, certain skills that are likely to be more effective than others, that research has proved to be of value and that will help learners to be more effective and confident [in their professional work]. (p. 70)

In order to fulfill all these functions to the best of their ability, educators need a certain level of meta-awareness of their own knowledge and skills; as Winston (2005) put it, there is a need for “teachers to have critical thinking skills about their own teaching in order to develop these skills in students” (p. 223).

Relationships and the Learning Climate

The relationship between the educator and the learner is an important factor in learning (Cox, 2013; Evans, 1999; Kolb, 2015). Beard and Wilson stressed that “the *authenticity* of the facilitator” (2013, p. 51) is a key factor for experiential learning, and Evans (1999) argued for placing more importance on the development of a positive, individual relationship between educators and learners. He noted that relationship development is especially important in field settings, which often involve a learner and an educator working together closely for a prolonged period. McSharry and Lathlean (2017, p. 76) also highlighted the importance of a positive trusting relationship between preceptors and learners in field placement. Among the characteristics of educators that may have an impact on learning are their “realness or genuineness, prizing or accepting, and empathetic understanding” (Evans, 1999, p. 13). Evans (1999) noted that there are three aspects of an educator-learner relationship that must be considered:

- The basic human relationship. It is important for learners and educators to view each other as human beings and respect appropriate personal and role boundaries. Relationship-building of this sort might include sharing some level of information about

life and hobbies outside work or the learning environment and engaging in casual conversation typical of workplaces or other similar settings.

- The learning relationship. This aspect of the relationship has to do with learning and teaching styles, and the extent to which a given dyad's styles are congruent or conflicting. Open discussion of the learner's and the educator's goals, approaches to problem-solving, and communication preferences can help develop a positive learning relationship.
- The power relationship. In most settings, the educator, by virtue of his/her role, is in a relatively more powerful position than the learner. Besides having greater expertise, the educator also generally has the authority to evaluate the learner's work and deem it acceptable or unacceptable. Power-related issues may also arise from factors such as race, gender, class, and other personal and professional characteristics of the educator and/or learner. Experiential learning places the learner at the center of the educational activity, but this change of focus does not obviate the basic power differential. Evans's (1999) primary recommendation for "counter[ing] the abuse of power in the practice teacher/student relationship is to become aware of it, to recognize its significance, and to discuss its ramifications in supervision sessions" (p. 174). He also recommended ensuring that learners have access to adequate (peer) support networks and assistance in navigating systemic barriers.

Given the increasing popularity of experiential learning techniques in primary and secondary education, it is perhaps unlikely that learners' first encounter with experiential learning would occur in the setting of tertiary education or professional development. Educators may therefore presume that learners already understand how this works; nevertheless, the fundamental importance of setting clear expectations and creating a positive learning environment is a strong argument in favor of open communication with students around issues such as these.

In addition to setting ground rules and taking steps to create a psychologically-safe learning environment, Beard and Wilson (2013) stressed that educators and learners should establish clear expectations and goals, set aside time for their work together (including time for provision of feedback), and work to establish a trusting relationship with each other. Wurdinger and Carlson (2010) encouraged educators to discuss various aspects of the educator's and learner's roles in experiential learning activities with learners in order to establish clear expectations. They suggested covering the following:

> Teacher's Role
> 1. The teacher will act as a guide allowing students to make mistakes and learn from them along the way.
> 2. Teachers will provide students with freedom to experiment in order to discover solutions to the problems they encounter.
> 3. The teacher will provide students with resources and information when they get stuck so that they can continue moving forward with their learning.

Student’s Role

1. Students will be allowed freedom in the classroom as long as they are moving forward in the learning process.
2. Students may need to undergo a series of trials and errors as they attempt to complete the assignment.
3. Students should understand that the problem solving process becomes as important as the concepts being learned. (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010, p. 13)

Kurtz et al. (2005) also offered a number of concrete steps for establishing positive learning climates and developing relationships with learners:

- The educator should be well-prepared and confident.
- Learners should be engaged in an active discussion of ground rules for the learning community, including desired behaviors, behaviors to be avoided, etc.
- Clearly and explicitly discuss educator and learner expectations and responsibilities to themselves and each other.
- Have clear learning objectives, and involve the learners in adapting the objectives and course agenda to their own needs.

Beard and Wilson compared the hierarchal mode (provider-centered) to a cooperative mode (learner-centered) in Table 2.

Table 2. A Dichotomy of Power and Control

Learner-centered	**Provider-centered**
Providers work with the natural curiosity and concerns of the learner.	Passive learning is encouraged.
There is a learning contract.	The provider has a rigid syllabus to get through.
Real issues and problems are worked on and used as vehicles for learning.	Trainees learn by memorizing, and use artificial case studies.
Feedback on self-performance is encouraged.	Learning is monitored, examined, and assessed by the trainer.
Learners are considered to have a valuable contribution to make.	The trainer is the repository of knowledge.
Learners are trusted to learn for themselves.	The teacher/trainer knows best.

Responsibility for learning is shared with the learners.	Trainees wait for the trainer to lead.
The learning provider offers resources to learn.	Learning is limited to the trainer's knowledge.
Learners continually develop the program.	The trainer dictates the flow of the program.
Learners and providers have joint responsibility and power.	The trainer has responsibility and power.
There is a climate of genuine mutual care, concern and understanding.	Trust is low; trainees need constant supervision, and the trainers remain detached.
The focus is on fostering continuous learning, asking questions and learning is at the pace of the learner.	Knowledge is dispensed in measured chunks decided by the trainer.
Emphasis is on promoting a climate for deeper more impactful learning that affects life behavior.	Emphasis on here-and-now acquisition of knowledge and skills to do the job.
There are no teachers, only learners.	The teacher/trainer is, and remains the expert.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Education, Training and Coaching (3rd ed.)* by C. Beard and J. P. Wilson, 2013, p. 57. Copyright 2013 by KoganPage.

Providing Feedback

Feedback is an essential element of experiential learning, and provision of feedback is an important facet of the educator's task (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Evans, 1999; Kolb, 2015; Kurtz et al., 2005). The need for feedback to be positive and constructive was highlighted by Kurtz et al. (2005), who noted that learners' (in their case, students of medicine) prior experiences may have involved either minimal feedback or negative feedback; learners may also associate feedback with graded assessments rather than with the process of learning. D'Hayer (2006) recalled a statement from a former interpreting student working as a conference interpreter that real-world clients were easier to satisfy than interpreting teachers had been. D'Hayer pointed out the potential for psychological harm associated with negative feedback, calling it "old-fashioned and unfair" (2006, p. 68).

Kurtz et al. described optimal feedback as "specific, detailed, non-judgmental and well intentioned" (2005, p. 68). Beard and Wilson (2013) made similar recommendations:

- Feedback should be clear and specific.
- It should focus on the behavior and not the person.
- It should focus on behavior that can be improved.
- It should be invited where possible and not thrust at the learner.
- It should be delivered in a timely manner. (p. 69-70)

Kurtz et al. (2005, p. 72) suggested a problem-based approach in which "the learners' own perceived difficulties…provide the focus for observation and learning." They argued that such an approach mitigates threats to face, thus decreasing learners' defensiveness. They recommended that the learner begin by discussing the difficulties encountered in a given exercise or experience; that the feedback be based on the learner's goals for the activity (in their specific case, the communication outcomes desired by the provider/patient); that the learner start out by engaging in self-assessment and problem-solving and then involve the whole group of learners in the problem-solving process. To facilitate this process, they made a number of recommendations about providing constructive feedback:

- Use a descriptive approach to feedback ("I noticed X") rather than a judgmental/evaluative one ("You did well at Y").
- Be specific—give concrete, detailed examples drawn from the performance.
- Focus feedback on behavior rather than on personality.
- Make comments that will benefit the learner, and avoid comments that do not serve a specific purpose for the learner.
- Mention both positive and negative aspects of performance; use knowledge/observation of the learner and of the group to determine when (during the session) to focus on positive versus negative aspects of performance.
- Offer suggestions and identify alternative courses of action, rather than making blanket statements or recommendations: "Consensus regarding a single 'best' alternative is not the objective. Tentativeness rather than certainty, open-mindedness rather than dogmatism, the valuing of alternative viewpoints rather than the giving of prescriptive advice" is the goal (Kurtz et al., 2005, p. 119).
- Give only the amount of feedback that the learner is seeking or that the learner will benefit from (avoid overload).
- Use caution when giving feedback on things that cannot be changed; offer support/advice, but avoid embarrassing the learner.
- All members of the group should support each other and act with good intentions.
- Learners should have the opportunity to seek out feedback (insofar as possible, unsolicited feedback should be avoided).
- Check with the learner as to his or her receipt of the feedback—was it correctly received/understood?

Kurtz et al. (2005) recommended the use of video- or audio-recorded performances as the stimulus for feedback, to allow the learner to observe and reflect on his or her own actions. It also avoids the possibility that the learner and the educator might have differing recollections

of what actually happened during the performance on which feedback is being given. Their experiences are, of course, likely to be different, but the video/audio provides an objective basis for reference.

Evans (1999) emphasized the need to build learners' confidence and self-concept by providing constructive, positive comments, and noted the importance of recognizing learners' strengths: "it is only after strengths have been clearly acknowledged that many students can readily accept the practice teacher's identification of their weaknesses" (p. 214). Balance is necessary, however, as overdoing the positive is also unhelpful, if not harmful, to learners, "[depriving] the student of a valuable opportunity for further learning, no matter how accomplished they are" (Evans, 1999, p. 214). He recommended that educators talk openly with learners about weaknesses in their own professional practice and invite feedback from learners. In addition to establishing a trusting relationship and reducing power imbalances, this approach may reduce learners' feelings of anxiety or inadequacy and open the door to honest, reflective conversation around the learners' strengths and weaknesses. Although the provision of feedback is one of the central duties of the educator in a field placement, Evans (1999) cited evidence suggesting that supervision or feedback sessions between preceptors and learners often end up focusing on other subjects/issues and thus spend a relatively small portion of time engaged in provision of feedback on performance. He therefore recommended that preceptors and learners agree on timing and process for provision of feedback.

Feedback during field placement, mentoring, or supervision is not a one-way process—rather, it should be a dialogue between both parties. During the initial portion of a field placement feedback is largely focused on helping learners to become acclimated to the site and accustomed to their duties. Although learners should receive feedback continuously throughout the placement, Evans (1999) recommended two more formal reviews of performance (i.e., assessments), one at the mid-point of the placement and the other at the end of the placement. He noted that the placement agreement should be used to structure the reviews, especially in terms of assessing what targets have been reached and what targets still need to be addressed, and that they should involve both on-site and academic educators (that is, the preceptor and the academic supervisor). The feedback provided in these sessions is two-fold: retrospective feedback, focused on the learner's performance so far, and prospective guidance, focused on what the learner should do moving forward. These reviews should also provide space for the learner to evaluate the placement (both site and experience). End-of-placement reviews should also include some emotional/social closure on the experience.

Conclusion

This paper has provided readers with a broad overview of experiential learning with some specific examples from the literature on interpreting pedagogy. It was written to serve as a

foundation for developing or revising curriculum for interpreter education programs. Given this purpose, we anticipate that readers will explore the references to delve deeper into areas most relevant to their current work. In any program, there is usually a place for a variety of approaches, and it is incumbent on the educator to select the approach best suited for the goals of the course or program. Still, preliminary evidence supports the use of experiential learning in interpreter education, and more programs are incorporating this approach in the classroom as well as through field placement and service learning. The river, reaching back to Roberts's (2012) metaphor used in the introduction to this paper, runs deep, with strong and often unusual currents as well as muddy and clear waters. This is one of the many resources that may be useful in navigating the process of teaching interpreting more effectively.

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