

## RID

Fall 2017 

## Highlights

## Face to Face Board Meeting Summary

## Behind the Scenes: Leandra Williams Path to PhD

## Regional Conference Update

## CATIE Center Graduation to Certification

# Finding Your Way From Graduation to Certification

Produced by the CATIE Center at St. Catherine's University  
ASL translation by Rania Johnson

*It's a journey... that I propose  
I am not the guide ... nor technical assistant ...  
I will be your fellow passenger . . .*  
~ Nikki Giovanni

For many novice interpreters, the path from entry to practice is not a clear one. Graduation from an interpreting program may bring as many questions as it does answers. How do graduates develop the knowledge and skills they need to earn national certification and continue to develop as competent interpreters? What evidence-based practices could be incorporated into IEPs to clarify this pathway? How can mentoring, coaching, community involvement, and supervised interpreting experience pave this pathway? The CATIE Center at St. Catherine University is developing a Graduation to Certification (GTC) program to address these questions and support novice interpreters who are starting their professional journey.

## GTC's Mission

The CATIE Center has been awarded a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to design, pilot, and evaluate a graduation to certification model program using evidence-based practices. A major goal is to demonstrate approaches that reduce the average time it takes graduates from bachelor's programs to earn RID certification. RSA requires that the program be experiential and accessible to individuals across the nation and to those with family/work responsibilities, include at least 150 hours of interact-



**Youtube Link:** <https://youtu.be/19caJhKTFDU>

ing and learning with Deaf people in the community, include a community of practice, and include mentoring/coaching. The program also seeks to increase the number of interpreters from underrepresented groups, which RSA defines as communities of color, people working with at least three languages, rural residents, and men. Additionally, the program must have components that are replicable and sustainable by other programs and agencies.

During the 2018 pilot year, the CATIE Center will accept fourteen participants into the GTC program, and 30 in subsequent years. This is a relatively small number of participants, but the resources developed by the GTC project, including a variety of online ma-

terials, will be available to any interested students, novices, mentors, and educators.

## Program Development

Our work began in January 2017 with one year to develop the required components of the program. Although reducing the time from graduation to certification is an immediate need, to transform the field we need to examine both the education in IEPs as well as the resources and support for interpreters after they graduate. We seek to bring together the best of both the academic world and community resources.

A foundation of this program is evidence-based principles. A significant resource is the book *Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter Brown, Henry Roediger, and Mark McDaniel. This book contains an accessible explanation eleven years

Then you're taught the answer and you remember that longer by doing generation.

Woven into the components of the GTC program, including the mentoring and immersion experiences, will be principles such as generation; these principle-based activities can make the learning more durable and effective.

The program incorporates community resources by requiring a minimum of 150 hours of connection to the Deaf community. One of the main outcomes RSA noted in its call for proposals was the need for novices to increase their involvement with the Deaf community. Because participants may live anywhere in the country, the GTC program is designed to allow participants, with the advice and support of a language and cultural coach, to build these connections where they currently live.

Additionally, we are reaching out to interpreting service agencies to gain insight in several areas. What characteristics are they seeking in new interpreters? What are effective on-boarding practices? How can they partner in hosting field induction experiences? At the Accelerate conference in August 2017, a number of agency representatives shared ideas both for the GTC program and for future participants. Here's an example from Ryan Shepherd:

There are two key factors that I have noticed related to interpreters who are recent graduates from ITPs that really have an impact on their success. The first being that they grew up signing. They didn't just have one to three years of learning sign language before entering an ITP, they grew up immersed in the deaf community. The second factor is they love Deaf people and Deaf culture. When asked why they are interpreters it is because they love the community and culture, not because they love ASL. Interpreters who love the community and culture have more of an impact and are more successful than those who are just enamored with the language. Those are two of the biggest things I have noticed with novice interpreters.

One of our goals is for elements of the GTC program to be adopted by interpreting agencies. By more effectively training mentors and supervisors, the on-



**Youtube Link:** [https://youtu.be/GJ2\\_sNqIPSQ](https://youtu.be/GJ2_sNqIPSQ)

of research into memory and cognition. Peter Brown, the principal author, is an advisor for the GTC program. This past June, 25 advisors gathered for an online Think Tank to discuss the book and how to apply its principles to interpreter education and the GTC program. One of the ideas presented in the book is generation, which Peter Brown explains in an interview with the CATIE Center (2017):

Generation is one of the desirable difficulties that the research shows is useful. That is, you're posed a problem, you try to generate an answer and even if you generate the wrong answer, the act of surveying your knowledge and in proposing an answer has a sort of priming effect.




boarding of novice interpreters could become more consistent and successful. This would benefit novices, agencies, and the Deaf community.

## Wayfinding

Even with the GTC program, the pathway for new interpreters will not become uniform or an easy one to navigate. The communities where interpreters are needed are simply too diverse. The CATIE Center seeks to combine the support of educational institutions, community resources, and interpreting agencies, but success will also come out of effort and sacrifice on the part of novice interpreters.

In many ways, the GTC program hopes to promote wayfinding skill development, rather than just the ability to navigate known territory. Shankar Vedantam (Penman, 2017), host of NPR's Hidden Brain podcast, puts it this way: "Wayfinding isn't just about finding out where you need to go. It's about getting comfortable with the idea that you may not have just one destination." Recent graduates may be daunted by this prospect, but do not have to face it alone. As the Graduate to Certification program builds on efforts to diversify the profession and strengthen the entry pathways into practice, we can provide companions for novice interpreters on this journey. Participants, mentors, and supervised placement hosts are invited to travel with the CATIE Center in exploring the path from Graduation to Certification. Extending our invi-

tation, we share the poetry of Nikki Giovanni (2003): For more information about the Graduation to Certification program, please visit our website: [grad2cert.org](http://grad2cert.org). 

## References

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*It's a journey ... that I propose ...  
I am not the guide ...  
nor technical assistant ...  
I will be your fellow passenger ...  
I promise you nothing ...  
I accept your promise ...  
of the same we are simply riding ...  
a wave ...  
that may carry ... or crash ...  
It's a journey ...  
and I want ... to go ...*

## About the Author:

The CATIE Center at St. Catherine University is committed to promoting excellence in interpreting education. Our work involves Deaf and hearing faculty, staff, students, stakeholders and innovative partners both locally and nationally. We have been awarded grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration to advance interpreter education since 1999. In 2016, two grants were awarded for 2017–2021:

**Graduation to Certification:** Under award H160C160001, the CATIE Center will investigate, pilot, evaluate, and disseminate evidence-based practices to decrease the time between graduation and certification.

**Mental and Behavioral Health Interpreting:** Under award H160D160003, the CATIE Center will focus on increasing the number and diversity of certified interpreters available to work in mental and behavioral health settings.

