



MARIE Center

Update on the
National Consortium
of Interpreter
Education Centers

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This is the fourth in a series of E-blasts from the Mid-America Regional Interpreter Education Center (MARIE) informing members of our region about new programs and products resulting from the work of the NCIEC during the 2005-2010 funding cycle. MARIE is one of the six Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) funded centers that constitute the NCIEC. This month we are highlighting two hardworking workgroups of the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC)-the Legal Interpreting Work Group and the Deaf Interpreter Workgroup. Both have developed some excellent tools for practitioners and consumers.

Legal Interpreting Workteam

This work group has spent the current funding cycle working to survey and document the competencies and best practices of interpreters working in the legal and court setting. In an early series of focus groups conducted with practitioners, a common need expressed was for tools to help educate the legal system about the work of interpreters. In particular, practitioners expressed the need for evidenced-based tools that support unique practices relating to interpreting teams, role designation, conflicts-of-interest, Deaf interpreters, and consecutive interpreting. Three primary products have been developed to address these needs.

With assistance of a pool of national experts in legal and court interpreting a set of competencies and best practices of interpreters in these settings was identified and published. Their validity and application to the day-to-day work of interpreters was verified through a national survey of legal interpreters and a series of focus groups with interpreters working in these settings. The publication, *Best Practices for ASL-English Interpreters working in the Legal and Court Setting*, is available online at <http://www.nciec.org/> under the project link for legal interpreting. It can be downloaded, copied and distributed by all interested persons. Further, the workgroup is currently creating a series of one-page information sheets related to specific areas of best practice that can be shared as part of a practitioner's effort to educate members of the Deaf Community and legal system.

A second important tool is a brief about Deaf interpreters; *Deaf Interpreters in Court: More than a reasonable*

accommodation. This 100-page brief provides a comprehensive analysis of the use of Deaf interpreters in case and state law. It is a fascinating analysis which identifies for the courts the conditions that are typically present that warrant the use of a Deaf interpreter. Typically, it is matters where there is a Deaf juvenile, a foreign-born Deaf person, a Deaf person with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), or other barriers to language/communication access. This brief is an invaluable tool for increasing our understanding of the legal considerations surrounding the use of Deaf interpreters and is a key resource in promoting wider use of Deaf interpreters as specialists and best practice-particularly in complex and/or high-risk legal matters. This document is also available online at <http://www.nciec.org/> under the project link for legal interpreting.

The third tool is an Annotated Bibliography of Resources and Publications for interpreters working in the legal setting. It offers an excellent review of key materials that should be a part of any interpreter's library who wants to specialize in interpreting in legal and court settings. It too is available on the website.

When you visit the site, you will see other resources that have been placed there for use by the interpreting community. These materials have also been placed on the RID and NAJIT websites. Further distribution efforts will continue for the remainder of the year.

Deaf Interpreting Workteam

Another exciting initiative of the NCIEC is the Deaf Interpreter Work Group. This team has created a separate website that showcases all of its products and resources. And, much of the information is available there in both ASL and English. For example, one of the ASL clips describes Deaf Interpreting and how it works.

One of the resources available on this link is a Domains and Competencies of Deaf Interpreters document that delineates the unique competencies of Deaf interpreters. After reading this document, it is easy to see and appreciate the qualities and abilities that make a Deaf interpreter a language specialist. This information can be very useful when talking with decision-makers about the need for a Deaf interpreter. It also defines a range of skills and knowledge necessary for planning training programs for Deaf Interpreters.

Another great element of this website is the calendar of events. It provides announcements about upcoming training events and/or other activities of interest to Deaf interpreters and the general Interpreting Community.

There is also a link to a variety of resources too-such as a wide range of materials related to interpreting for Deaf-Blind interpreters, the use of Deaf interpreters in court, and an annotated bibliography of literature about Deaf interpreting, and other material relevant to the experiences of Deaf Interpreters.

Another exciting element of the website is the ASL clips where several different Deaf interpreters offer their analysis of a case study involving a Deaf and hearing interpreter team. The comments offered by each Deaf interpreter provide important insight for all interpreters about the importance of working together collaboratively in teams.

Be sure to check out the website at <http://diinstitute.org/>. There are plans to include a Directory of Deaf Interpreters on this site and news about upcoming training is updated regularly. The contact information for the work group staff is also available should you have feedback and experiences to share.
