An Interpreter in my Classroom: What do I do now?

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Audience Check In

☐ Teaching experience with Deaf Students?
☐ Working with a Signing Assistant?
☐ Working with an Interpreter?
☐ Grade levels?
☐ Questions you want answered today?
What Shapes my Interest?

- Background and experiences as:
  - Interpreter (still interpret)
  - Elementary Teacher: Direct Instruction
  - Interpreter Educator
  - Curiosity about learning for Deaf children in mediated vs direct learning classes
  - Major emphasis on “inclusion” in Canada leaves me with many questions
Presentation Overview

- What is mediated vs. direct instruction
- Role of an interpreter
- Working with an interpreter
- How do I create a relationship with the child
- Adjusting classroom practices
Mediated Education vs. Direct

Key Concept for Teachers:
- Working with an interpreter does NOT mean the child has equal access.
- Child has different access and it is NOT the same experience as direct education with a teacher that shares their language.
- Education in mediated through the interpreter.
 Interpreter & Mediation

- Interpreting - Human activity requiring a great deal of training
- Even with training, it is still “mediated” through their experience, understanding, linguistic fluency, familiarity with teacher intent and goals, etc.
- Classrooms – place of constructing knowledge – teachers/students – now have a third partner in the co-construction
Mediation and Effectiveness

- When is a child ready for a mediated education?
- Factors from research (Russell, in progress)
  - Direct education experience K-6/K-8
  - Accessible communication in home
  - Deaf friends/social support outside school
  - Print literacy – grade/near grade level
Child Profile

- Assertive enough to stop teachers/students
- Able to interact with others
- Deaf-friendly school:
  - Texting system
  - Video/skype to home
  - Curriculum inclusions of Deaf content
  - Opportunities to go on Deaf field trips
  - Direct instruction at times
Influences on Educational Context

- Parents: no experience with deaf children
- Professionals: variety of opinions, perspectives, knowledge and experience with what a “deaf life” might mean (Powers & Leigh, 2011)
- Different perspectives lead to different decisions on program delivery
  - Ex: oral vs sign
  - Ex: placement in home school vs. program
Significant mismatch

- Language and communication skills of deaf children and others in their day-to-day environments (parents, close family, classmates, teachers)

- Home and School:
  - Reduced opportunities for linguistic mediation of their experience and active construction of knowledge (Gallaway, 1998; Marschark et al, 2002)
Student Engagement (Friesen, 2010)

- **Social Engagement**: Belonging and participation in the school life
- **Academic Engagement**: Participation in the formal requirements of schooling
- **Intellectual Engagement**: Serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning, using high order thinking skills (such as analysis and evaluation) to increase understanding, solve complex problems or construct new knowledge
What is an Interpreter?

- Completed 3 years of formal full time study
- Canada – 5 Interpreter Education Programs
- Member of professional association AVLIC
- May have had a practicum with Deaf children, however the curriculum for training interpreters – adult language focus
What is an Assistant?

- May have formal EA program
- Typically have had 1 to 3 sign language courses – 45 hours of instruction each course
- Think about your knowledge of other languages
  - French – high school, plus 3 week immersion, still only pivot grammar and function in limited settings
Basic Roles

Interpreter
- Provide interpretation of all classroom content/interaction
- Participate in team meetings
- Prepare for classroom interpreting needs (review prep materials from teacher, etc)

Teacher
- Provide prep materials/guidance on content/intent/function
- Meet with interpreter regularly
- Adjust teaching strategies to allow for effective interpreting
What is NOT in the Roles

**Interpreter**
- Provide classroom instruction
- Advise teacher on teaching strategies
- Copying, laminating, finding resources

**Teacher**
- Allow interpreter to assume full responsibility for Deaf student’s program
Transmission Model of Interpreting

Speak  Sign  Equivalency
What really happens? Co-Construction

Teacher
- Content
- Context
- Function
- Intent and Function

Interpreter
- L1/L2 fluency
- Content
- Content
- Function
- Adult/Child Interpretation Strategies

Student
- World Knowledge
- School Readiness
- Language Fluency
- BICS
- CALP
- Academic experience
Classroom Language Use

Analyze the linguistic functions in teaching/learning discourse with purpose (skopos) as overlay on each

- Six common discourse frames (Cazden, 1988):
  - Metacognitive Questions
  - Scaffolding
  - Reconceptualizing
  - Reciprocal Teachings
  - Feedback
  - Sequencing
On the hands of the best interpreters...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Use</th>
<th>Accurate &amp; Effective</th>
<th>Not accurate/Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCQ</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffold</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recip Teaching</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconceptualize</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does this mean?

- Illusion of Inclusion?
- The known & suspected limitations of interpreting as a basis for full and equitable access to classroom communication
What’s the problem?

- Adult language use/interaction not the same as emerging language use in Deaf children
- Most interpreters & assistants
  - ASL is their second language
  - Incomplete language model for 6 hours a day does not allow access to language
  - Interpreters – beliefs about transmission model of language use vs co-construction model
So how do I work with an Interpreter?

- Talk with them explicitly about what you expect the students to be doing
- What do they understand about education?
- Reduce Simultaneous Demands in Classroom – reading/talking at same time
  - Deaf child – divided attention means loss of access to information
Preparation & Pre-Teaching

- Prep with interpreter – what do you want students to be thinking about?
- Pre-teaching as cognitive support- teacher/interpreter/peer tutor/family
- Use of visual material
- Reducing dual tasking simultaneous demands
Interpreting Audits

- Conduct assessments of “interpretability” of classroom activities
- Requires Consultant/interpreter/teacher to conduct ‘audit’
- Assess potential for accessible with modification, problematic contexts, and situations that require so many modifications that it would not be recommended for interpreting
Prep is not just reading...

- Help them see ahead in the program; Ensure they are doing the prep
- Active vs Passive Prep
- Language to convey the academic content
- Language and Interpreting Tutors
- Supervision of Interpreter?
Recognizing Limits of Interpretation

- Interpretability of content in the environment (Winston, 2004)
  - Interpretable
  - Interpretable with modification
  - Interpretable with significant modification
  - Not interpretable

- How do teacher’s use language to create environments that are meaningful?
More Tips on Working Together

- Lighting
- Positioning
- Interaction Demands
  - Discussions
  - Small Group – talking ball
  - Calling on Deaf child
- Multiple speakers at same time:
  - who do you want to be interpreted?
And more ideas…

- Captioned media
- Consider ways to mirror the Deaf Life in the classroom
  - Classroom presentations
  - Classroom field trips
  - ASL poetry lessons
  - Role models – Deaf lawyers, medical doctors, oil and gas engineers, etc
  - Success stories vs. can’t stories
Adjusting Classroom Practices

- Biggest one: Manage the classroom talk
- Your classroom is Bilingual and Bimodal
- Pause more often – count before responding to allow for interpretation to catch up
- Consider the fatigue factor of watching interpreter for 6 hours a day
  - Balance the individual/small group/large group activities
Adjusting Classroom Practices

- Understand the challenges of simultaneous interpreting
- Natural Prosody
- Fatigue - impact on accuracy and effectiveness
- Overuse Syndrome; need for teams
How do I create a relationship with the student

- Learn some survival signs like you are
- Social greetings – welcoming
- Feedback signs – positive and corrective
- Written notes – paper, computer, white board
- Text, email – depending on age of student
- Sticks in jar
- Wait for them to answer
Watch for your Hidden Curriculum

- Hidden Curriculum:
  - unplanned learning outcomes associated with learners’ exposure to particular attitudes, actions or ideas (Power & Leigh, 2011)

- Influence of professionals:
  - Form of communication:
    - if emphasis on speech, uncomfortable with alternate forms of communication, uncomfortable with a different linguistic of cultural perspective on deafness – shapes a “hidden curriculum”
As a school community

- Direct Access options via technology?
- Regular coaching from master mentor teacher (like Linda Cundy, etc)
- Field trips/Tournaments with other Deaf children
- Language Support – Deaf models
  - Learning language via interpreting - MYTH
As a school community

- Homework Support – Deaf tutors
- Opportunities across regions
  - Ex: BC, Maine, Boston – Art Festival
- Funding for Extra-Curricular Interpreting – full school experience
As a school community

- Have the interpreter access supervision and mentoring via someone qualified to do that
  - Ex: Manitoba model

- Continuous learning and in-service options

- Schools with significant mass of students more able to offer environments that support Social, Academic and Intellectual engagement
Final Reminder..

- Belief that mediated education works, either interpreter or assistant, leads to...

- Teacher Instructional Practices
  - Simultaneous demands
  - Appearance of access/Illusion of Inclusion
  - Overlapping conversations
  - Non captioned materials
  - Bystander vs. active participant status
  - Learning in spite of, not because of…
Co-construction of learning

- The ‘transmission’ model of interpreting in education is a problem
- Teacher/interpreter/Deaf student/non-deaf students all constructing meaning in teaching/learning environments

- Our decisions can:
  - Engage or distance Deaf learners
  - Can create passive learners
Intention Informing Interpreting (Russell and Winston, in progress)

- Teacher Intent Informs Interpreting
- Student Needs/Preferences Inform Interpreting
- Interpreting Process Informs Interpreting
- Linguistic Issues Inform Interpreting
Teacher Intent Informs Interpreting (TII)

- Goals/Intent
  - Does interpreter recognize engagement strategies and categories

- Classroom Strategies
  - Social, Academic, Intellectual

- Interaction with Students
  - Classroom management and creating relationships
Student Needs Informs Interpreting (WII)

- Profile of Student
- Strengths
- Language Preferences
- Language acquisition supports
Interpreting Process Informs Interpreting (I)

- Interpreting Process – discourse processing, CI, SI
- Interpreter role
- Classroom Logistics
- Preparation
- Matching Intent
Linguistic Issues Informs Interpreting (I)

- Linguistic Issues – ASL & English
- Name Signs for classmates
- Introducing nonce signs and new vocabulary
- Conventional language use – Deaf language models for interpreters and students?
Rethinking Issues

- Students held back by lack of qualified interpreters and intervenors
- Interpreting is not enough; teacher practices must be significantly modified
  - pausing/pacing – if students are to be able to participate
- Children lack meaningful relationships with other children who can use sign language, especially from Grade 3-12
D-PAN

- Waiting for the World to Change

Questions? Comments?

- Thank you for your interest
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