

Fostering partnerships: an autoethnographic study of collaboration between a hearing, signing
teacher of the deaf and two American Sign Language interpreters

by

Danielle (Dani) Willhite

B.S., Missouri State University 2016
M.S., Missouri State University, 2018

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2025

Abstract

As the population of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students in mainstream classrooms continues to grow (Luckner & Muir, 2001b; Stinson & Antia, 1999), effective collaboration among specialized professionals is increasingly vital (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b; Cogen & Cokely, 2015). This critical-interpretive autoethnographic study examined my experiences as a hearing, signing teacher of the deaf (TOD) working with two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters within a self-contained DHH science classroom. Grounded in Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, this research explored how our teamwork unfolded through the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Bonebright, 2010). Data collection employed triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 1978) through reflective video journals, structured interpreter interviews, and document analysis of job descriptions and professional development records (Schick, 2007; Seal, 2004).

Findings revealed that strong rapport and shared signing fluency supported smooth norming and performing, and role ambiguity, mismatched preparation, and feedback tensions emerged during storming and adjourning, highlighting the emotional labor involved in navigating daily collaboration. Divergences between my perspective and the interpreters' insights exposed systemic barriers and the need for clearer role negotiation and joint professional learning (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; M. B. Smith & Ramsey, 2010). By situating these personal reflections within broader cultural and institutional contexts, I offered insights that illuminate the complexities of role clarity and teamwork and highlight ways to foster more equitable collaboration that can support improved educational access for DHH students in inclusive settings (Antia et al., 2002).

Key Terms: ASL interpreters; bilingual-bicultural (Bi-Bi) program; collaboration; comprehensive teacher preparation program; critical-interpretive autoethnography; DHH; deaf education; language deprivation; language modality; listening and spoken language (LSL) program; reflexivity; role clarity; self-contained classroom; teamwork; Tuckman's stages of group development

Fostering partnerships: an autoethnographic study of collaboration between a hearing, signing
teacher of the deaf and two American Sign Language interpreters

by

Danielle Willhite

MS, Missouri State University, 2018
BS, Missouri State University, 2016

A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2025

Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Sherri Martinie

Copyright

© Danielle (Dani) Willhite 2025.

Abstract

As the population of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students in mainstream classrooms continues to grow (Luckner & Muir, 2001b; Stinson & Antia, 1999), effective collaboration among specialized professionals is increasingly vital (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b; Cogen & Cokely, 2015). This critical-interpretive autoethnographic study examined my experiences as a hearing, signing teacher of the deaf (TOD) working with two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters within a self-contained DHH science classroom. Grounded in Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, this research explored how our teamwork unfolded through the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Bonebright, 2010). Data collection employed triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 1978) through reflective video journals, structured interpreter interviews, and document analysis of job descriptions and professional development records (Schick, 2007; Seal, 2004).

Findings revealed that strong rapport and shared signing fluency supported smooth norming and performing, and role ambiguity, mismatched preparation, and feedback tensions emerged during storming and adjourning, highlighting the emotional labor involved in navigating daily collaboration. Divergences between my perspective and the interpreters' insights exposed systemic barriers and the need for clearer role negotiation and joint professional learning (Cogen & Cokely, 2015; M. B. Smith & Ramsey, 2010). By situating these personal reflections within broader cultural and institutional contexts, I offered insights that illuminate the complexities of role clarity and teamwork and highlight ways to foster more equitable collaboration that can support improved educational access for DHH students in inclusive settings (Antia et al., 2002).

Key Terms: ASL interpreters; bilingual-bicultural (Bi-Bi) program; collaboration; comprehensive teacher preparation program; critical-interpretive autoethnography; DHH; deaf education; language deprivation; language modality; listening and spoken language (LSL) program; reflexivity; role clarity; self-contained classroom; teamwork; Tuckman's stages of group development

Table of Contents

<i>List of Tables.....</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>Acknowledgements.....</i>	<i>xvi</i>
<i>Chapter 1: Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
Significance of the Problem	2
Field Inception: Where the Love was Born	4
“Learning Comes Through Pain”—Aeschylus.....	5
Research Inception	8
Conceptual Framework.....	10
Literature Synthesis and Problem Statement.....	12
Research Questions	16
Summary.....	16
<i>Chapter 2: Literature Review</i>	<i>18</i>
Collaboration Among Teachers.....	18
Collaboration Among Educational Staff.....	20
Collaboration in Deaf Education.....	21
Shifts in Deaf Education.....	21
Characteristics of DHH Learners	24
Students Who Use Interpreting Services	28
Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers of the Deaf.....	29
The Nuanced Roles of the Educational ASL Interpreter.....	32

The Intersecting Roles of TODs and ASL Interpreters	35
Teacher of the Deaf Preparation Programs	36
ASL Interpreter Preparation Programs	42
Gaps in Research.....	48
Conceptual Framework: Expanded Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977)	
Stages of Group Development	49
Tuckman's Developmental Sequence in Small Groups	51
Autoethnography as a Framework and Method	53
Summary.....	55
<i>Chapter 3: Methodology.....</i>	56
Purpose of the Research.....	56
Research Questions	56
Qualitative . . . Really Professor?	57
Qualitative Research	58
Gaps in Literature.....	60
Hesitancy of Study.....	61
Setting.....	64
Participants	68
Participant Job Descriptions and Background	70
Research Design.....	73
Critical Analysis.....	75
Data Collection	77
Video Journals	78
Structured Interviews	79

Research Timeline	82
Institutional Review Board Approval	83
Data Analysis.....	84
Video Journal Analysis	85
Document Analysis	85
Interview Analysis	88
Triangulation of Data Sources	88
Convergence and Divergence Analysis	89
Analytical Framework.....	89
Positionality Statement.....	89
Summary.....	91
<i>Chapter 4: Results</i>	92
Personal Journal Analysis	93
Day 1: March 3, 2025	94
Day 2: March 4, 2025	101
Day 3: March 6, 2025	108
Day 4: March 10, 2025	115
Day 5: March 12, 2025	124
Day 6: March 26, 2025	130
Journal Synthesis.....	135
Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Through Personal Journals	135
Interpreter Interviews	140
Interpreter Interview Results.....	142
Interview 1: March 7, 2025.....	143

Interview 2: March 13, 2025	148
Interview 3: March 27, 2025	151
Interview 4: April 3, 2025.....	154
Interpreter Interview Synthesis	158
Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Through Interpreter Interviews.....	160
Summary	168

Convergences And Divergences: Personal Journals and Interpreter Interviews ..169

Forming: Shared Initiative, Environmental Adjustment, and Responsive Support During Instruction..	171
Storming: Navigating Emotional Strain and Roles	172
Storming/Norming: Boundary Negotiation and Mutual Grace.....	173
Norming: Embracing the Flow of the Work.....	174
Performing: Role Clarity, Student Independence, and Coordinated Support Through Anticipatory Collaboration.....	175
Divergences.....	176
Forming: Confidence vs. Uncertainty in Role Definition.....	176
Storming: Attribution of Challenge and Emotional Labor.....	177
Norming: Vigilance vs. Relief in Predictability	177
Performing: Focus on Logistics vs. Instructional Outcomes	178
Adjourning: Readiness vs. Reflection	178

Emergent Constructs and Future Talking Points.....179

Forming: Role Clarity Through Lived Practice	181
Storming: Collaborative Recalibration and Navigating Fear of Judgment	182
Norming: Role Fluidity and Communicative Alignment	182
Performing: Adaptive Specialties Through Collaborative Alignment.....	183
Adjourning: Professional Visibility.....	184
Integrating Emergent Constructs Across DHH Teaming	185

Chapter 5	186
Interpretation of Findings.....	187
Critical Reflexivity and Power	196
Implications.....	197
Implications for Theory	197
Implications for Practice	198
Implications for Policy	199
Limitations and Future Research	201
Dear Dani...It's going to be ok.	206
References	208
Appendix A: Teacher of the Deaf Job Description.....	244
Appendix B: Educational Interpreter Job Description	249
Appendix C: 2024-2025 Educational Interpreter Asynchronous Professional Development Modules.....	261
Module Twelve: Deaf Learners (TODs/Paras)	266
Appendix D: March 3, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts	269
Appendix E: March 4, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts.....	271
Appendix F: March 6, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts.....	275
Appendix G: March 10, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts	278
Appendix H: March 12, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts.....	283
Appendix I: March 26, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts	286

Appendix J: Interview I, March 7, 2025.....289

Appendix K: Interview 2, March 13, 2025.....306

Appendix L: Interview 3, March 27, 2025318

Appendix M: Interview 4, April 3, 2025330

List of Tables

Table 1. Interpreter's Code of Ethics	45
Table 2. Research Timeline	83
Table 3. DHH Professional Development Participation Summary	86
Table 4. Themes Derived from Open Coding of March 3, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965) Stages of Group Development	99
Table 5. Themes Derived from Open Coding of March 4, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	106
Table 6. Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 6, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	113
Table 7. Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 10, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	121
Table 8. Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 12, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	128
Table 9. Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 26, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	133
Table 10. Journal Synthesis Table	138
Table 11. Interview 1: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	145
Table 12. Interview 2: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	149

Table 13. Interview 3: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	152
Table 14. Interview 4: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	155
Table 15 .Theme Alignment with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development from Interpreter Interviews	162
Table 16. Convergences Between Interpreter Interviews and Teacher Journals Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	164
Table 17. Divergences Between Interpreter Interviews and Teacher Journals Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development	169
Table 18. Emergent Constructs, Focus, Purpose, and Guiding Questions	181

Acknowledgements

Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without the unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement of so many incredible people in my life.

Dr. Karen Engler, thank you for believing in me from the very beginning of my journey as a deaf education professional. From my undergraduate years through my masters and back again for my doctorate, you have always seen more in me than I ever saw in myself. Your empathetic patience, constant encouragement, and commitment to our shared vision of collaboration and stakeholder involvement in deaf education have shaped me as a teacher and researcher. I am especially grateful for your role as the deaf ed specialist on my committee, for championing the spirit of teamwork I value so deeply, and for pushing me to reach my full potential in grad school. Your support has been instrumental in my growth and success.

Dr. Gretchen Fricke, you have been my unwavering support throughout this process. Thank you for enthusiastically coaching me in APA style, providing detailed and thoughtful feedback, and dedicating countless hours to ensure that every section was clear, accurate, and strong. Your guidance has been invaluable, and your commitment to my growth as a scholar means the world to me.

Dr. Sherri Martinie, thank you for quickly taking me under your wing during a time of unexpected staffing changes that could have disrupted my progress. Your calm demeanor, practical feedback, and unwavering belief in my abilities made a significant difference. You reminded me that my dissertation is indeed a massive undertaking, and that I am more than capable of completing it successfully.

To my amazing husband and my sweet babies, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and love throughout this journey. Thank you for being my rock

during the tough times, cheering me on with patience and encouragement when I felt overwhelmed. Your belief in me has made all the difference, and I deeply appreciate the sacrifices you've made to help me achieve my goals. I love you all more than words can express, and I could not have done this without each of you by my side.

To my two wonderful ASL interpreters, thank you for inspiring me every day with your passion, heart, and enthusiasm. Your commitment to empowering Deaf students and your love for our collaboration make me a better teacher of the Deaf. I am honored to share this space with you and learn from you each day

Chapter 1: Introduction

As the number of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students in mainstream schools continues to rise, there is an urgent need for effective teamwork and collaboration among the deaf education team. This is particularly crucial due to the ambiguity surrounding the roles of deaf education professionals and support personnel, specifically the relationship between signing teachers of the deaf (TODs) and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in special education environments. The increasing trend in DHH students attending mainstream schools, partly driven by legislative measures such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), underscores the pressing need for these students to receive the educational support they require.

With the increasing number of DHH students attending mainstream schools, there is a need for a multidisciplinary team to provide educational, language, and social support (Esera, 2008). This team can offer auditory and visual supports tailored to each student's individual needs (Waincott & Spurgin, 2024). Research indicated that DHH students face unique educational and linguistic challenges, highlighting the importance of having a cohesive multidisciplinary team of specialized educators and interpreters to effectively address their needs (Esera, 2008; Neild & Fitzpatrick, 2020). This study used an autoethnographic approach to explore the complexities of the relationships, roles, and teamwork dynamics between TODs and ASL interpreters, with the aim of fostering improved collaboration that enhances the success of DHH students.

Significance of the Problem

Collaboration within the deaf education team is not just beneficial, it is crucial for enhancing outcomes and social skills for Deaf students. Existing research emphasizes the joint efforts of TODs, audiologists, speech language pathologists (SLPs), and general educators (Educational Audiology Association, 2018). Blaiser and Nevins (2017) found that such interprofessional collaboration helps bridge service gaps, promote consistent communication support, and align individualized plans to better serve DHH students. The collaboration between TODs and SLPs is vital for assisting DHH students in inclusive environments (Secora & Shahan, 2023). Similarly, collaboration among TODs, DHH students, and educational audiologists is highly effective (Gustafson et al., 2024). Research underlines the significance of collaborative strategies for supporting DHH students in mainstream settings (Compton et al., 2015). Salter et al. (2017) investigated the learning experiences of Deaf students from the perspectives of teaching assistants and indicated that strong collaboration between TODs and general educators is essential for achieving better outcomes. However, Salter et al.'s research involved interviews with participants regarding their classroom roles but did not address the involvement of interpreters. Given the complexity of the team, it is concerning that the working relationships between ASL interpreters and TODs have not been systematically studied, despite both providing crucial support to DHH students.

Communication gaps and misunderstandings related to each professional's role can impact Deaf students' autonomy and participation in the general education setting, ultimately influencing student learning outcomes (Prinzi, 2024). The role of ASL interpreters is particularly complex and often ambiguous in educational contexts. Research shows that interpreters frequently experience role conflict, as they are expected to maintain neutrality while

simultaneously taking on additional responsibilities such as mediator, advocate, or tutor when situations demand it (Dickinson & Turner, 2008; McDermid, 2009). This persistent role ambiguity can lead to significant emotional labor, including feelings of guilt, frustration, and burnout among interpreters, which in turn affects their ability to maintain clear professional boundaries and provide consistent language access for Deaf students.

There exists a pressing need for comprehensive research that specifically addresses the existing gaps in clarity and training concerning collaborative frameworks between TODs and ASL interpreters. These challenges can hinder effective communication and educational outcomes for DHH students. By considering and reflecting on the obstacles faced in these collaborative efforts and highlighting strategies for effective collaboration, this research aims to bridge the gap between the roles of signing TODs and ASL interpreters. This, in turn, may enhance the collaborative dynamics essential for providing optimal educational experiences for DHH students.

Utilizing Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development as a theoretical framework, this study analyzed the intricate collaborative dynamics present in these educational settings. Tuckman's stages delineates five distinct stages of team development: (a) forming, where team members come together and establish initial relationships; (b) storming, in which conflicts and differences may arise as roles and responsibilities begin to be clarified; (c) norming, where the group establishes norms and cohesiveness; (d) performing, during which the team functions effectively and achieves its objectives; and (e) adjourning, the final stage where the team disbands after accomplishing its goals. It is important to note that while Tuckman's (1965) original model outlined four stages, the adjourning stage was later added in collaboration with Jensen (1977) to capture how teams disengage and reflect once their work is complete.

Throughout this research, particular emphasis will be placed on the critical importance of conflict resolution strategies and nurturing of team cohesion. Effective conflict resolution skills are essential in minimizing misunderstandings and fostering a supportive environment, allowing both TODs and ASL interpreters to work collaboratively towards shared educational goals. By focusing on these elements, the research aims not only to illuminate the challenges faced in this field but also to provide actionable solutions that promote a harmonious working relationship between educators and interpreters, ultimately benefiting students in the DHH community.

Field Inception: Where the Love was Born

To situate this study within my own lived experience, I share how my passion for Deaf education and collaboration first emerged. It is interesting how our unplanned journeys can lead us to unexpected places. As a TOD, I've often been asked how I got into this unique field, one that is not always well-known or fully understood by others. It's a little disheartening when people confuse me with ASL interpreters, audiologists, ASL teachers, or my personal favorite "the hearing teacher," but I'm used to it and know those asking simply do not have the background. It's another example of the awareness needed around the field and the roles we play.

I can still vividly recall my first encounter with someone who was deaf. I must have been around 9 or 10 years old and living on a military base. I remember waiting for the bus, dressed in a rather distinctive and perhaps unflattering light blue polo shirt tucked into a red and dark blue plaid skirt, complete with white ankle socks and clunky tennis shoes. Little did I know, that moment would ignite a passion within me that has shaped my life in a profoundly positive way. While I waited for my bus, I noticed an unfamiliar bus drive past. It was always the same bus, on the same route, yet it often seemed fairly empty. One day, a little girl, maybe a year or two

younger than me, stepped off that bus, her bright-colored hearing aids catching my eye.

Intrigued, I felt a strong urge to learn who she was, why she went to a different school, and know more about her story.

One day, I decided to approach her home and knocked on the door. Her mother answered, and without hesitation, I asked what was “wrong“ with her daughter. To my surprise, her mother replied calmly, explaining that nothing was wrong at all. Her daughter was hard of hearing and attended a special school for kids like her. That simple encounter opened my eyes. I became eager to learn about this little girl and her world.

Before long, the little girl began teaching me the manual alphabet and, years later, I found myself taking an ASL class in the trailers behind my high school. I often reflect on that experience and realize how pivotal it was in shaping my understanding and appreciation of different ways of communicating. It’s a journey I will always cherish. This personal history shapes the lens through which I examine the stages of group development and daily collaboration with ASL interpreters.

“Learning Comes Through Pain”—Aeschylus

During my very first year of teaching, I found myself stepping into a large school district over 200 miles away from my hometown and college town to join a significantly larger school district than I had ever experienced. The school I was working in was labeled a partnership school, which meant I had been hired through a specialized school district focusing on special education services, specifically placed in a district school that catered to many DHH students. This opportunity was invigorating, and I fully adopted my husband’s philosophy of “fail it ‘till you nail it.” I was placed in a partnership school, a designated school building for DHH high schoolers to attend, providing specialized instruction for DHH students.

The scope of responsibilities between my teaching in my hometown and this larger district was insurmountable. For reference, my hometown in 2018 had a total population of 166,633, while the county in which I was employed had a population between 900,000–100,000,000. It was a stark difference! During my student teaching, the environment was intimate with approximately six DHH students, one TOD, three ASL interpreters, and a process coordinator who oversaw all special education processes within the building. The district in which I was employed in my first year of teaching had 14–16 DHH students, eight to nine ASL interpreters, one paraprofessional, one speech language pathologist (SLP), one social worker, one audiologist, and one special education coordinator with certification in teaching the deaf in just one building. The diversity within this new school district was remarkable—some students required only minimal services in self-advocacy, while others participated in self-contained settings and work placements. The dynamics presented various challenges as I sought to navigate the varying population in staff and students, but I was hungry to meet the challenges head-on. The opportunity to collaborate with such a diverse and skilled team was exhilarating; I had always seen fostering collaboration as one of my strengths, and the environment provided an ideal setting to cultivate relationships and unify our efforts to support our students most effectively. Until . . . the honeymoon was over. Maybe it was the slow pace of my hometown, my limited experience working with others in a large team, my limited professional experience overall, or the people-pleasing tendencies of the Midwest, but I was shortly met with some intense experiences that have likely shaped who I am today.

With a bigger team, school, and caseloads came a much more fast-paced environment in which decision-making was made at a much faster pace. In my hometown, we could simply send a text to a staff member or open the door in the hallway to ask a quick question. That luxury was

not possible at a school with nearly 2,000 students in one building. The current processes for the building included communication strategies using an app called GroupMe, where the entire team communicated important information such as staff and student absences, upcoming events, changes in individualized education plan (IEP) services, team meetings, and urgent needs such as a TOD needed in the office or an ASL interpreter needed for a last-minute change. There were a lot of last-minute changes that needed to be made. I remember feeling so relieved to have 1st hour plan, as my phone buzzed incessantly and I could not imagine trying to teach and respond to messages simultaneously.

I was overwhelmed always feeling one step behind even when arriving to work an hour early and working 2–3 hours from home every day. It felt impossible. During these quick information shares, it seemed someone was nearly always upset. For example, if an interpreter was needed and all interpreters were in a class and did not have the opportunity to check their phone, a service may have been missed. Conflicts and corrective conversations occurred in person, but also occurred over email and text which seemed to cause frustration among everyone. Though I can not recall the specifics, I remember a paraprofessional emailed me upset about constant changes in scheduling, services, and requests. These written conversations felt highly critical, sharp, and reactive.

Recalling the beginning of the year conversation between the special education coordinator, I tried implementing 1:1 face-to-face conversation among concerns and using active listening strategies, such as employing full attention, not checking my phone, taking notes, and summarizing reported concerns. I texted the paraprofessional, asking for their time when available and they promptly came to my room minutes after texting. They entered the room visibility upset, shoulders tensed, and quickly grabbed a chair sliding it close to my desk. I can

not even recall what they said but the phrase uttered was the first of many that have significantly impacted my life, budding my dissertation topic, finding patterns among these narratives around buildings within the school district. They said, “I’m just the para.”

Research Inception

Throughout my time at Kansas State University, my research topics have evolved from teaching bilingualism in the classroom to the effectiveness of using a new curriculum, and now to reflecting and contemplating contentious relationships within this field. During my initial 3 years in the same district at the high school level, I had a fantastic experience of collaborative teamwork. The fundamental concept in this position was “do your job” or d.y.j. Although there was an additional letter in the acronym, I’ll stick with this one for now, as it is more appropriate. This expression was not intended to undermine or lessen anyone’s role, but rather to highlight the main priority should be to serve students and staff, with everything else being of secondary importance.

During my time at the high school, I established strong relationships with nearly all DHH staff members and experienced significant professional growth. By my 3rd year, I took on additional responsibilities working at the middle school during the extended school year program. This experience allowed me to work with two ASL interpreters and four DHH middle school students, and I quickly developed a deep appreciation for the environment and the students. Upon learning that two TODs had left, with one becoming itinerant and the other leaving the district, I saw an opportunity to make a change. After spending 1–2 weeks at the middle school, I decided to approach my supervisor about transferring from the high school to the middle school. My supervisor was supportive of this move. Although I was apprehensive about informing my colleagues turned friends, I was ready to embrace the challenge.

I believed that the skills and experience gained at the high school would help me better support students' transition to the high school level. As a teacher from a comprehensive TOD program, I feel confident in providing direct communication to these students. Although the former TODs graduated from oral/aural programs, I am not aware of a formal assessment of their signing skills.

During the summer, I eagerly prepared for the classes I would be teaching and collected the names of the DHH team to formally introduce myself. Although I was aware of some negative rumors about the middle school team, I remained determined to bridge the gap between teammates, drawing from the positive experiences I had in the past of bringing people together. My motivation stemmed from a genuine desire to unite teams and empower individuals to enhance the instructional experiences for all DHH learners.

In my first year as a middle school teacher, I faced several challenges that left me feeling frustrated and disheartened. Unlike my previous experiences, where disputes were handled through respectful conversations, the dynamics at the middle school were quite different. During a joint presentation with my coteaching partner, where we discussed fire, tornado, earthquake, and intruder drills, I attempted a strategy I had found effective before. I asked the ASL interpreter to fingerspell a word beforehand, hoping to engage the students in a discussion about the meaning. So instead of voicing the word intruder, in which the definition may be unintentionally provided in ASL (i.e., "stranger-not-want-enter"), I asked the interpreter to fingerspell the word to encourage student input on the new word. However, I was met with an unexpected and perceived confrontational reaction from the interpreter; they said, "I got it. I know how to do my job," rolling their eyes and cheeks flushed with frustration. I was stunned.

This reaction was so different from what I had experienced before, where my approaches had been met with understanding and collaboration. There was an awkward silence in the room, and I could feel the eyes of my students, paraprofessionals, and interpreters on me. It was as if everyone was holding their breath, unsure of how to react. In that moment, I felt an intense wave of anger, shame, and confusion wash over me.

My instincts told me to address the situation immediately, but I struggled to maintain my composure and keep the lesson on track, all the while worrying that my face was probably flushed with emotion. After the lesson, my coteacher and I transitioned through our day. Once the students had been dismissed, I texted the interpreter, expressing my discomfort with the approach taken and requesting a private conversation in the future. To my relief, they replied quickly, indicating their availability, and I felt hopeful about the potential for resolution. However, when I opened the door for our meeting, I was taken aback to find the interpreter accompanied by another colleague, both bearing intense expressions. Their body language did not suggest a welcoming conversation, and I felt a knot tighten in my stomach. This experience only intensified my awareness of the delicate balance of power and roles within our field, and how crucial it is to foster understanding and collaboration, rather than conflict.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is rooted in Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, which provides a robust structure for examining the dynamics of collaboration and teamwork. This model, later expanded by Tuckman and Jensen (1977), is particularly pertinent to the study of interactions between signing-hearing TODs and ASL interpreters within the context of DHH classrooms. Tuckman's model delineates the development and evolution of teams through five critical stages: forming, storming, norming,

performing, and adjourning. Each stage embodies distinct characteristics and challenges, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of teamwork among diverse professionals in deaf education.

Applying Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, which was later expanded by Tuckman and Jensen (1977) to include the adjourning stage, is especially beneficial for examining the intricate nature of multidisciplinary teams in deaf education, where clear role definition and effective collaboration are vital for providing high-quality support to DHH students. In this context, the theory offers a valuable lens through which to analyze the collaborative interactions between signing, hearing TODs and ASL interpreters, illuminating both the strengths and the challenges inherent in their professional partnership.

Additionally, Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, later expanded by Tuckman and Jensen (1977), enables a nuanced analysis of the various challenges that can arise during collaboration. This framework provides valuable insight into how team roles may shift or become fluid across different stages, deepening our understanding of the collaborative process. By applying the structured stages of team development, this study examines how team dynamics and role negotiations evolve in practice, ultimately helping to identify effective strategies that can strengthen collaborative efforts.

In summary, Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, along with its later refinement by Tuckman and Jensen (1977), provides an essential foundation for this study by offering critical insights into the complexity of collaboration within DHH classrooms. By leveraging this theoretical framework, the research aims to deepen understanding of teamwork processes and enhance strategies that better support the educational needs of DHH students.

Literature Synthesis and Problem Statement

Collaboration across professional fields is crucial in educational settings to support student learning, particularly for the inclusion of students with disabilities (Hernandez, 2013; Vlcek & Somerton, 2023). Effective collaboration involves various stakeholders (Vlcek & Somerton, 2023) and has been shown to produce positive, lasting effects on teaching and learning outcomes when implemented across the entire school system (Borg & Drange, 2019). Within the broader discourse on interprofessional collaboration in inclusive education, there is increasing attention to the specific roles and collaborative efforts of ASL interpreters, students, general educators, and other educational professionals. However, a significant gap remains in the research concerning the nuanced dynamics of collaboration specifically between TODs and ASL interpreters, especially in cases where they function as part of the same educational team. Effective collaboration involves sharing perspectives, knowledge, and strategies, which can lead to meaningful changes in the classroom and potentially transform learning environments (Weddle et al., 2020).

Several studies have demonstrated that ASL interpreters and Teachers of the Deaf often lack structured preparation and clearly defined frameworks for working together effectively. Adekeye (2020) found that “the absence of structured training frameworks to guide sign language interpreter–teacher collaboration . . . resulted in power imbalances, unclear role boundaries, and limited shared responsibility” (p. 14). Similarly, Dickinson and Turner (2008) observed that “interpreters and teachers had little or no preassignment planning or shared understanding of each other’s roles” (p. 238), while Langer (2004) noted that these role conversations “often never occurred” (p. 45) before the school year even began.

Research indicated that ASL interpreters and other professionals working with Deaf students often feel unprepared for effective collaboration in educational settings. For example, Hutter (2019) found that “overall, educational interpreters . . . continue to feel unprepared for careers in educational settings,” underscoring a clear lack of preparedness for collaborative practice in K–12 classrooms. Studies highlighted the need for improved training and collaboration between interpreters, teachers, and SLPs to better support DHH students (Brimm, 2018; Ott et al., 2020).

University programs are developing interdisciplinary models to train different professions together but may not adequately address the dispositions and practical skills necessary for effective collaborative practice (Wainscott & Spurgin, 2024). Studies have suggested that interprofessional education and collaborative experiences during training can improve preparedness and confidence for interpreters and professionals working with Deaf students (Halpin & Shaffer, 2023; Secora & Shahan, 2023). To address these gaps in both attitude and applied skill, researchers recommend providing explicit instruction in collaboration for preservice teachers. Effective strategies for developing these competencies include joint classroom experiences, explicit training in critical interpersonal skills, coteaching models, and opportunities to practice conflict management (Montgomery & Akerson, 2019; Secora & Shahan, 2023).

The educational landscape is profoundly influenced by legislative frameworks like the IDEA (2004) and the ESSA (2015), which have led to a notable increase in the enrollment of DHH students in mainstream schools. This trend creates an escalating demand for multidisciplinary collaboration among educational professionals to address the diverse needs of these students (ESSA, 2015; IDEA, 2004). The inclusion model, which refers to placing students

with disabilities in general education classrooms or schools alongside their hearing peers, with appropriate supports and services, aims to provide equitable access to the general curriculum and promote social and academic integration. However, many DHH students encounter obstacles within this model, primarily stemming from inadequate understanding and delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each professional within the educational team.

TODs play a crucial role in supporting DHH students in public education. Their responsibilities often extend beyond direct instruction to include consulting with general education staff and providing support for students' mental health and well-being (Dorn, 2019; Furness et al., 2019). However, many TODs report feeling underprepared for the consultative aspects of their role and face ongoing challenges with communication and collaboration across the broader educational team (Dorn, 2019).

The scarcity of research examining the collaboration and partnerships between TODs and ASL interpreters is compounded by the varying philosophies that underpin TOD preparation programs. Educator preparation programs for TODs often align with three general models: (a) listening and spoken language (LSL) focused programs, which typically offer minimal or no coursework in sign systems; (b) bilingual–bicultural (bi-bi) programs, which emphasize intensive ASL fluency and Deaf cultural competency; and (c) comprehensive programs, which integrate multiple communication approaches and emphasize flexibility in addressing diverse student needs.

LSL programs primarily focus on auditory and oral outcomes (Soman & Nevins, 2018) and emphasize early intervention and advanced hearing technologies to develop spoken language skills (Simpson & Mayer, 2023). Bilingual–bicultural programs aim to provide students with full access to both Deaf and hearing cultures through direct instruction in ASL and English literacy,

fostering bilingualism and biculturalism (Griffin, 2018; Kuntze, 2014). Comprehensive programs encompass diverse instructional approaches, including sign bilingualism, differentiated instruction, and literacy development, and place an explicit focus on how communication modalities interact with cognitive development, theory of mind, and academic achievement (Engler & MacGregor, 2018; Marschark & Knoors, 2018). Engler's (2018) phenomenological case study of a Midwest comprehensive TOD program further demonstrated that these programs not only build the technical skills need to perform in the field, but also foster "empowered and enabled" learning communities by combining direct services for DHH students with a teacher preparation program rooted in supported varied communication modalities.

Research indicates that oral TODs often lack sufficient ASL proficiency, which can limit direct communication with students and impact learning outcomes (Beal et al., 2018). The relationship between Deaf students and interpreters is crucial for supporting classroom participation and academic success (Prinzi, 2022). Likewise, close collaboration between interpreters and teachers is essential, as interpreters are integral members of the educational team (Brimm, 2018).

To address these significant gaps in understanding and practice, it is crucial to delve deeper into the current collaborative practices between TODs and ASL interpreters within classroom environments. By applying Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, later refined by Tuckman and Jensen (1977), as a theoretical framework, we can gain insights into the stages of team development and identify potential barriers to effective collaboration. This understanding could pave the way for the development of strategies aimed at fostering stronger partnerships between these professionals, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes and experiences for DHH students. Exploring these dynamics not only has the potential to enrich

the professional practice of both TODs and ASL interpreters but also to enhance the overall quality of education provided to DHH students.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer two primary and one secondary research questions. The primary research questions are:

1. What are my experiences collaborating with ASL interpreters in a DHH self-contained classroom?
2. In what ways do my experiences reflect or diverge from the group development stages described by Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977)?
3. In what ways does my background as a graduate of a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program impact my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters within a self-contained DHH classroom?

Summary

The integration of DHH students into the mainstream setting highlights critical challenges, particularly the ambiguity surrounding the roles of deaf education professionals and support staff, such as TODs and ASL interpreters. This becomes even more evident when signing teachers work alongside ASL interpreters within the deaf education classroom. Legislative frameworks like IDEA (2004) and ESSA (2015) have pushed for an increase in the inclusion of DHH students in mainstream classrooms, emphasizing the need for effective teamwork to meet their unique educational and linguistic needs. However, gaps in understanding and collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters may adversely affect student outcomes, underscoring the necessity for research to bridge these divides.

Employing an autoethnographic approach, this study will examine the nuanced dynamics between a signing TOD and two ASL interpreters, using Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, as later refined by Tuckman and Jensen (1977), as the theoretical framework. This research will analyze team development through its five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Extensive research highlights the benefits of collaboration in inclusive education more broadly (Kurowski et al., 2022). However, the specific dynamics of signing Teachers of the Deaf and ASL interpreter partnerships remain under-examined (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Prinzi, 2022). Although bachelor-level interpreter preparation programs (IPPs) focus primarily on developing interpreters' linguistic fluency and cultural competence (Ferré, 2018), and TOD preparation programs emphasize language acquisition and pedagogical strategies, there remains limited exploration of collaborative practice between these roles. Dorn (2019) highlighted a growing need to teach collaboration and consultation in TOD training programs, and L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew (2004) noted that interpreter education often overlooks teamwork and shared role understanding with TODs. This research seeks to explore the challenges and opportunities for improving teamwork. This study's primary focus is to document and analyze experiences while examining the influence of comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation programs on collaboration practices, aiming to develop strategies that enhance education accessibility for DHH students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Effective teamwork is recognized as a critically important skill across industries; reviews in fields ranging from aviation and healthcare to elite sports and consistently identifies communication, leadership, and cohesion as foundational to team performance (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1993; Salcinovic et al., 2022). Employers value teamwork alongside technical skills, reflecting the complexity of projects and the need for cross-disciplinary cooperation (Salas et al., 2005; Tarricone & Luca, 2002). In public education, teamwork among teachers has been shown to enhance teacher commitment (Park et al., 2005) and positively impact student achievement, particularly in math and reading (Goddard et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Effective teamwork benefits both general and special education students by improving lesson planning, resource sharing, and support for diverse needs (Friend & Cook, 2013; Gebhardt et al., 2015). Consequently, training programs and professional development have expanded to optimize teamwork skills and align teacher preparation with school needs (Friend & Cook, 2013). Furthermore, effective faculty group development is linked to improved student outcomes on standardized tests (Wheelan & Kesselring, 2005). Initiatives promoting teamwork among teachers, such as team-building activities and collaborative professional development, are vital for teacher performance and school success (Goddard et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

Collaboration Among Teachers

Collaboration among educators is widely acknowledged as essential for enhancing student achievement and advancing professional development (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Cooperative efforts among educational personnel provide numerous advantages, such as professional growth, decreased workload, and augmented student engagement (Muckenthaler et al., 2020). Empirical studies suggest that the social structures

within schools, particularly relationships among educators, play a significant role in the exchange of knowledge and collaborative efforts, which can be strengthened through interventions such as professional learning communities and coaching (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Moolenaar et al., 2012; Vangrieken et al., 2017). Furthermore, research indicates that collaboration initiated by educators cultivates trust and encourages openness (García-Martínez et al., 2021), while reciprocal peer observation bolsters perceptions of collaborative school culture and collective agency (Corcelles-Seuba et al., 2024).

Although collaboration among educators is perceived as beneficial for enhancing student outcomes and refining teaching practices (Brownell et al., 2006; Tichenor & Tichenor, 2019), the implementation and sustainability of collaboration in educational institutions may encounter challenges due to structural constraints, reluctance among teachers, and insufficient engagement (García-Martínez et al., 2021; Sutton & Shouse, 2016), leading institutions to confront difficulties in effecting instructional changes (Sutton & Shouse, 2016).

Additionally, collaboration may yield limited positive results. Educators who prioritize acquiring knowledge as an individual objective rather than a collective endeavor may restrict opportunities for peer learning in collaborative environments, thereby potentially compromising students' academic progress (Louie, 2016). Moreover, collaborative spaces might perpetuate existing practices instead of challenging inequitable teaching norms entrenched within departments (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Consequently, teacher preparation programs should integrate collaborative experiences to adequately equip candidates for clinical practice (Weiss et al., 2017).

Collaboration Among Educational Staff

Collaboration among school staff is essential for enhancing student achievement and ensuring the inclusion of all learners. The practices of school leadership significantly influence the facilitation of instructional collaboration, with principled support serving as a predictor of teachers' engagement in collaborative endeavors (Castro Silva et al., 2017; Min et al., 2016). In inclusive settings, interprofessional collaboration is increasingly vital, yet it continues to present challenges (Wiedebusch et al., 2020). Effective interprofessional collaboration involves a range of professionals—such as teachers, social workers, and school nurses—working together to address the diverse needs of students. Interprofessional education plays a crucial role in preparing future professionals to collaborate effectively within school environments (Dobbs-Oates & Wachter Morris, 2016; Gardner et al., 2022). Nevertheless, challenges persist, including varying perceptions of collaboration among professionals and the necessity of including student input in the decision-making process (Fenwick & Kelly, 2023; Gallagher et al., 2020). Additional obstacles encompass time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and resistance from colleagues (Pfeiffer et al., 2019). Furthermore, a lack of clarity regarding roles and expectations can impede effective collaboration (Reuterswärd & Hylander, 2017).

For interprofessional collaboration to be successful, it is imperative to establish clear objectives, allocate time for engaging with other professionals, and define roles appropriately. Frequently, interprofessional collaboration appears isolated from regular school activities, highlighting a tension between teachers' autonomy and the necessity for collaboration (Fenwick & Kelly, 2023). To enhance interprofessional collaboration, there is a pressing need for integrated training opportunities at the university level, as well as professional development initiatives that are accessible to all school staff (Pfeiffer et al., 2019).

Collaboration in Deaf Education

The educational framework for DHH students are supported by a multidisciplinary team of professionals, which plays a crucial role in addressing the unique learning needs of these individuals. This team typically comprises specialized educators, such as teachers of the deaf (TODs), alongside general education teachers, speech language pathologists (SLPs), educational audiologists, and administrators (Educational Audiology Association, 2018), as well as ASL interpreters (Davenport & Weir, 2022; L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Wainscott & Spurgin, 2024).

TODs are essential in providing direct educational services and collaborating with general education staff to ensure that DHH students receive appropriate learning experiences (Dorn, 2019). In addition, SLPs focus on facilitating language development, often requiring specialized training that equips them to effectively address the diverse language needs of DHH students (Page et al., 2018; Veyvoda et al., 2019). This collaborative approach among professionals is vital in promoting successful educational outcomes for DHH students.

Shifts in Deaf Education

Deaf education has experienced significant changes since implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 and The No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (NCLB, 2002), now known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015). As of 2022, 8.2% of students who were DHH were enrolled in residential school programs, and a substantial 88.4% attended mainstream schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The demographic data encompassed students who are DHH, representing a diverse spectrum of characteristics. This includes variations in the use of assistive devices such as cochlear implants and hearing aids, differences in cultural backgrounds, communication modalities, age at which hearing

difficulties were identified, and levels of academic achievement. Such a multifaceted perspective is essential for understanding the unique experiences and needs of DHH students.

The IDEA legislation established a framework to ensure that students with disabilities, including those who are DHH, receive a free appropriate public education within their least restrictive environment. As a result of these changes, an increasing number of DHH students are now included in mainstream educational settings, reflecting a growing commitment to inclusive education (Hendry et al., 2020; Marschark et al., 2006). Despite the intent behind inclusive education, many DHH students need more support and resources that cater to their specific communication needs (Shaver et al., 2014; Silvestri & Hartman, 2022).

The effectiveness of inclusive education could provide more consistency across different cohorts of DHH students, particularly for those who communicate using ASL. In many mainstream classrooms, the absence of vital accommodations, such as qualified interpreters and educators proficient in ASL, can lead to feelings of isolation for these students (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022). Moreover, implementing the least restrictive environment can inadvertently result in a one-size-fits-all approach, often prioritizing placement in general education over meeting the unique needs of individual learners. Critics argue that this emphasis on general placement can lead to insufficient specialized programs and tailored instruction (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022).

The increase in DHH students attending mainstream schools has also fueled growth in the ASL interpreting field. Effective educational experiences for DHH students require highly skilled interpreters who can facilitate communication and support inclusion (Luckner & Muir, 2001; Seal, 2004). However, as demand grows, the supply of qualified interpreters has not kept pace, raising concerns about training and service quality (Seal, 2004).

The IDEA (2004) has underscored the necessity of ensuring communication access for all DHH students, compelling schools to provide appropriate accommodations, including ASL interpreters and assistive listening technologies, to facilitate full communication access within the classroom (Marschark et al., 2006). Deaf education, as a distinct sector within special education, addresses the intricate and diverse needs unique to DHH students. These students often encounter challenges related to congenital hearing loss, which significantly impacts their language development and academic outcomes (Luft, 2017). Traditional special education methodologies frequently fall short of adequately addressing these needs, as they tend to focus on deficits and overlooking the cultural dimensions integral to deaf education (Hoffmeister, 1996). Research has consistently demonstrated that DHH students thrive in language-rich environments where accessible communication is prioritized (Antia et al., 2002; Livingston, 1997; Spencer & Marschark, 2010), emphasizing the critical role that TODs play in fostering communication and learning (Knoors & Marschark, 2012; Luft, 2008).

Since the inception of the IDEA (2004), there has been a notable shift from residential schools to local mainstream schools for DHH students (Marschark et al., 2002; Stinson & Antia, 1999). However, the cultural aspects associated with Deaf education are often marginalized within the framework of special education (Hoffmeister, 1996; Holcomb, 2013). Historically, the pedagogical emphasis centered around the acquisition of listening and spoken language (LSL), driven by the misconception that ASL posed a barrier to language development (T. L. Humphries et al., 2012; Spencer & Marschark, 2010). Recent empirical studies have challenged this notion, revealing that proficiency in ASL positively correlates with both English acquisition and academic success (Cripps & Supalla, 2012; Davidson et al., 2014; Hrastinski & Wilbur, 2016; Rosen, 2006; Scott & Hoffmeister, 2017).

This philosophical shift regarding the placement and services provided to DHH students has facilitated the growth of educational interpreting, aligning with the objectives of IDEA and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA; Seal, 2004; Shroyer & Compton, 1994). Deaf education professionals have a pivotal role in supporting language acquisition, leveraging assistive technology, facilitating communication, advocating for student needs, and enhancing literacy skills. Nonetheless, concerns remain about reduced instructional time and limited exposure to the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of the Deaf community.

Characteristics of DHH Learners

DHH learners are diverse and require professional understanding of their diverse needs (Shaver et al., 2014). This population is characterized by its diversity, leading to a wide array of variations in language, communication modalities, cultural backgrounds, age of amplification, and the presence of additional disabilities. These factors result in DHH students being placed in a variety of educational settings, where services and accommodations are dependent on individual needs. Essential accommodations may include the provision of interpreters, note takers, hearing aids, assistive listening technology, captioning services, and extended time for assignments and assessments (Cawthon & Leppo, 2013; Shaver et al., 2014).

Ninety to ninety-five percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents who often lack familiarity with deafness, necessitating comprehensive support (Terry & Rance, 2023). Although approximately 2.8% of adults use sign language (Mitchell & Young, 2023), language deprivation remains a critical issue. Without full access to language, deaf children face cognitive impairments, social isolation, and increased vulnerability to abuse (T. Humphries et al., 2016). Such deprivation results in challenges in incomplete ideation, restricted translanguaging practices, and difficulties in writing (Holcomb et al., 2023; Stamp et al., 2021), alongside health

and behavioral challenges (W. C. Hall, 2017; J. J. Murray et al., 2019). Fewer than 2% of the 34 million deaf children worldwide receive early exposure to a signed language (J. J. Murray et al., 2019).

The impact of language deprivation includes language dysfluency, knowledge deficits, and behavioral issues (W. C. Hall, 2017). Early and consistent exposure to language, whether signed or spoken, is vital for developing language-related white matter tracts within the brain (Cheng et al., 2019). Additionally, DHH children face higher incidences of developmental delays, attention deficit disorder, autism, and social–emotional difficulties compared to their hearing peers (M. L. Hall et al., 2018).

The understanding of deafness has evolved from a solely medical perspective to include social and cultural models (Goering, 2015; Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Mugeere et al., 2015). The uppercase “D” in Deaf signifies cultural identity, and the lowercase “d” in deaf refers to the medical paradigm of deafness (J. B. Murray et al., 2007). This distinction often reflects differences in language preferences in ASL and spoken English. Deaf culture and identity are influenced by communication modality, community participation, and societal attitudes (Lambez et al., 2020; Mitchiner, 2022). For example, the hearing status of parents may affect deaf children’s communication modality and contextual learning during childhood (M. L. Hall et al., 2018).

The medical paradigm of deafness as a health impairment requires treatment, and the social model emphasizes societal barriers as the primary disability (Goering, 2015). Given the diverse characteristics of DHH students, tailored instructional approaches and accessibility measure led by qualified professionals are essential. These characteristics can be explored

through linguistic, social, cognitive, and educational perspectives, forming the foundation for effective support systems that enhance education experiences and outcomes for DHH learners.

Identity development among DHH individuals is complex and influenced by factors such as hearing loss severity, cochlear implant use, and communication proficiency (Goldblat & Most, 2018). Assistive technologies like cochlear implants have become increasingly popular, even among children with single-sided deafness (Corbin et al., 2023; Ganek et al., 2020; Santopietro et al., 2024). Communication modalities among DHH students vary widely. Although some DHH students use ASL, others rely on LSL or simultaneous communication, a combination of spoken and signed communication.

Many DHH students encounter barriers that contribute to an academic achievement gap compared to hearing peers, including limited access to resources, social isolation, and communication challenges (Marschark et al., 2005). However, deafness itself is not the primary reason for this disparity. With appropriate support and tailored teaching strategies, DHH students can excel academically, particularly in subjects like science and mathematics (Ediyanto et al., 2018; Marschark & Knoors, 2018). Differentiated instructional strategies, integrating visual aids, hands-on activities, and collaborative learning, have proven effective in supporting diverse learning styles (Ntinda et al., 2019).

Social and emotional factors significantly shape the experiences of DHH learners. Many face stigmas and isolation, increasing their vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Fellinger et al., 2012; Kvam et al., 2007; Scherer, 2023; Theunissen et al., 2014). Supportive communities of peers and educators can mitigate these risks and foster psychological well-being (Antia et al., 2011; Hintermair, 2008). Specialized programs that integrate social skills training with academic instruction promote overall success (Calderon & Greenberg, 2011; Goberis et al., 2012; Wolters

et al., 2012). Research underscored that DHH students do not uniformly exhibit superior visual-spatial skills, contrary to common assumptions, necessitating differentiated strategies to accommodate diverse learning preferences (Hauser et al., 2008; Marschark et al., 2016; Marschark & Hauser, 2012).

Assistive listening technologies (ALTs) such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, and remote microphone systems enhance access to educational environments for DHH students by improving sound quality and amplifying sound levels. These technologies increase speech intelligibility, particularly in noisy settings, and facilitate better communication (Flexer, 2011; Schafer & Thibodeau, 2006). Effective implementation of ALTs not only benefits DHH learners but can also promote inclusive classrooms by modeling effective communication strategies for all students (Luckner & Muir, 2001a). However, challenges persist, including resource availability, maintenance, and the need for training educators and students in ALT usage (C. D. Johnson, 2014; Luckner & Muir, 2001a). Collaboration among educators, audiologists, and families is crucial for fostering successful outcomes.

Language deprivation, the chronic lack of access to a natural language during critical periods, has profound implications for cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development (W. C. Hall, 2017; T. Humphries et al., 2016). This phenomenon, referred to as language deprivation syndrome, often results in communication deficits, literacy challenges, and educational struggles (W. C. Hall, 2017; Tomaszewski et al., 2022). Early and consistent access to language, whether signed or spoken, is essential for preventing these issues and fostering a sense of identity and belonging within the Deaf community (Hall et al., 2019).

The diversity of DHH learners necessitates a multifaceted approach to education, addressing their linguistic, social, emotional, and academic needs (Luckner & Carter, 2001;

Marschark & Knoors, 2012). Early language access, tailored teaching strategies, assistive technologies, and inclusive practices are critical for improving outcomes (Antia et al., 2011; Flexer, 2011; T. Humphries et al., 2016; Ntinda et al., 2019). By valuing the cultural identity of DHH students and addressing systemic barriers, educators can empower these learners to succeed both academically and socially (Holcomb, 2013; Kusters et al., 2017; Singleton & Tittle, 2000).

Students Who Use Interpreting Services

Students who use ASL interpreting services comprise a diverse demographic in educational settings, including differences in hearing loss, language experience, and communication preference. A significant portion of this population consists of individuals who are profoundly deaf and primarily communicate through ASL (Marschark et al., 2005). Additionally, students who are hard of hearing often access ASL interpreting services, especially when their ability to perceive auditory information is limited or when their hearing aids fail to provide sufficient amplification in acoustically challenging environments (Lersilp, 2016). Moreover, individuals who have faced language deprivation may rely on ASL interpreting services to support their language acquisition and improve their overall communication skills (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022). For these students, ASL interpreters represent essential language models, aiding them in the development of their linguistic competencies in ASL (Silvestri & Hartman, 2022; K. R. Smith et al., 2015). This function is particularly crucial in inclusive settings where DHH students interact with their hearing peers.

The engagement of ASL interpreting services among DHH students can be understood in terms of whether services are used primarily for receptive language or for both receptive and expressive communication (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Seal, 2004). Students who

rely mainly on receptive interpreting often do so because they are still developing expressive ASL skills or acquired ASL later in life, which can result in fluent comprehension but weaker production (Marschark et al., 2005; Mayberry & Eichen, 1991; Singleton & Newport, 2004). In contrast, DHH students who use interpreting for both receptive and expressive language tend to be more proficient in ASL and often had early exposure, supporting balanced skills (Caselli et al., 2020; Lillo-Martin et al., 2014; Mayberry & Lock, 2003). Early exposure to ASL is positively correlated with both receptive and expressive competence, ultimately improving students' participation in classroom interactions (Antia et al., 2011; Caselli et al., 2020).

Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers of the Deaf

The roles and responsibilities of TODs are comprehensive and dynamic, requiring a diverse skill set to effectively meet the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional needs of DHH students (Cawthon et al., 2009; Luckner & Carter, 2001). TODs provide a range of services, including direct instruction, consultative support for general education teachers, and coordination with multidisciplinary teams to ensure that appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies are in place (Dodd & Scheetz, 2003; Educational Audiology Association, 2018). In addition to academic support, TODs play a pivotal role in addressing students' mental health concerns, fostering self-advocacy skills, and promoting a positive Deaf identity. By adapting teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learning requirements and collaborating closely with families, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and interpreters, TODs help create an inclusive learning environment that empowers DHH students to succeed academically and socially (Cawthon et al., 2009; Educational Audiology Association, 2018).

In educational settings, TODs operate within specialized programs and mainstream classrooms, taking on roles such as consultants, resource teachers, itinerant educators,

coteachers, collaborators, or instructors in self-contained classrooms. The landscape of TODs' responsibilities includes providing direct instruction to DHH students, consulting with general education staff, and implementing strategies that enhance learning outcomes (Dorn, 2019; Furness et al., 2019; Hartman et al., 2023).

In a consultation model, TODs focus on indirect services for DHH students who may require minimal support in general education settings. This approach emphasizes collaboration with general education teachers to customize accommodations and instructional modifications as needed (Dorn, 2019). However, research suggests that many TODs feel unprepared for the consultative aspects of their roles, underscoring the need for enhanced professional development (Dorn, 2019; Kelly et al., 2020). Resource teachers are responsible for delivering direct instruction, conducting assessments, providing consultation, and managing assistive listening technologies (Bean et al., 2015; Klingner et al., 2002). Typically, these teachers remain within one school and focus on supporting DHH students through individualized or small-group instruction (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003; L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Luckner & Carter, 2001; Stinson & Kluwin, 2003).

Itinerant teachers, on the other hand, travel across multiple schools within a district, offering services to a wider range of students. Their duties encompass direct instruction in core subjects, especially reading and writing, and nonacademic areas such as self-advocacy (Antia & Rivera, 2016; Foster & Cue, 2009). Itinerant teachers also offer consultation to regular education teachers and parents, manage assistive technology resources, and coordinate educational services (Borders & Clark-Bischke, 2021; Foster & Cue, 2009). A significant portion of an itinerant teacher's time is invested in direct instruction that emphasizes language, listening, and speech development (Davison-Mowle et al., 2018).

Coteaching arrangements involve TODs and general education teachers working collaboratively to provide integrated learning experiences for DHH students, enabling them to engage alongside their hearing peers. This model seeks to leverage the strengths of both mainstream and specialized education through cooperative teaching strategies (Antia et al., 2019; Marschark et al., 2019).

Under the framework of IDEA (2004), TODs are tasked with implementing and overseeing the educational services outlined in students' individualized education plans (IEPs). TODs typically engage in one of three primary roles within school districts: consultative, resource or itinerant, or collaborative coteaching. When serving as consultants, TODs meet with general education teachers to advise on strategies for meeting the learning requirements of students receiving special education services. Itinerant or resource room TODs deliver targeted instruction tailored to students' specific needs, and those in coteaching roles collaborate closely with general education professionals on either a full-time or part-time basis (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003; Idol et al., 2000; Kampwirth, 2003; Moores, 2001; Stinson & Kluwin, 2003; Vaughn, 2003).

Overall, the role of a TOD is multifaceted, encompassing educational, social, and emotional support for DHH students (Dorn, 2019; Luckner & Carter, 2001). A TOD's contributions are vital in fostering communication, supporting language development, individualizing educational experiences, promoting social–emotional growth, collaborating with families and professional teams, and advocating for the needs and rights of their students (Educational Audiology Association, 2018; Friend & Bursuck, 2006). This essential work makes the role of a TOD particularly significant within the educational landscape for DHH students (Antia & Rivera, 2016; Borders & Clark-Bischke, 2021).

The Nuanced Roles of the Educational ASL Interpreter

ASL interpreters play a vital role as facilitators of communication between signing and nonsigning communities, particularly for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). Their primary responsibility is to interpret spoken language into ASL and vice versa, ensuring that Deaf students have equitable access to language and content in the classroom (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Seal, 2004). This role requires not only high proficiency in both ASL and English but also a deep understanding of the cultural nuances inherent to the Deaf community (Seal, 2004). In educational settings, interpreters must also skillfully manage the flow of classroom interactions among deaf and hearing students and staff, often navigating turn-taking and clarifications that affect instructional dynamics (Ott et al., 2020). Training for interpreters typically emphasizes interpreting techniques, ethical decision-making, and cultural competency (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Seal, 2004).

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID, 2007) sets standards and best practices through its Standard Practice Papers, which guide interpreters in pursuing excellence, maintaining ethical practices, and promoting awareness across diverse interpreting contexts. RID outlines key modes of interpreting, including standard interpreting (spoken English to ASL and vice versa), transliteration (spoken English to signed English), specialized oral interpreting for lip readers, and tactile signing for individuals who are DeafBlind. Interpreters are expected to prepare thoroughly for each assignment by researching relevant subject matter and specialized terminology.

Interpreting typically takes place in two primary forms: simultaneous interpreting, where the interpreter conveys the message in real time, and consecutive interpreting, where the interpreter delivers the message after the speaker has finished (RID, 2007). Both forms are

essential for maintaining clear, accurate communication and supporting full access in educational environments.

Educational interpreting for DHH students presents unique challenges. Seal (2004) highlighted job ambiguity and role conflict experienced by certified educational interpreters in K–12 settings. These challenges often stem from a lack of standardized job descriptions and conflicting expectations from administrators, teachers, and peers (RID, 2007; Seal, 2004). Research has shown that interpreters frequently assume roles beyond language transmission, including tutoring, advocacy, and cultural mediation, due to inadequate training and unclear expectations (McDermid, 2020; Silva & de Oliveira, 2016). Studies such as Valente and Boldt (2016) emphasized that interpreters engage in cultural mediation and pedagogical processes, and Tufar and Andronic (2020) advocate for specialized training in educational contexts. The inclusion of DHH students in mainstream classrooms has further highlighted the need for interpreters to mediate between sign and oral languages (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b).

The ambiguity surrounding interpreters' roles affects the quality of education and inclusion for DHH students. McDermid (2020) suggested clearer guidelines and a more recognized role for interpreters to enhance support for DHH students. Berge and Ytterhus (2015) noted that both deaf and hearing students expect interpreters to mediate language, coordinate interactions, and facilitate small talk. However, interpreters often experience role strain, burnout, and physical injuries (C. Humphrey, 2015).

Collaboration between ASL interpreters and school staff is critical for supporting DHH students. Research shows that in U.S. schools, interpreters are considered integral members of the educational team, working closely with teachers, SLPs, and other professionals to facilitate communication and inclusion (Brimm, 2018; Irvine Saenz & Langdon, 2019). Effective

collaboration involves joint planning, resource sharing, and mutual understanding of roles (Brimm, 2018; Silva & de Oliveira, 2016). Interpreters may extend their responsibilities to include activity preparation, cognitive development support, and progress updates (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b; Seal, 2004). However, challenges such as insufficient training and reliance on family members as interpreters persist, especially in smaller or rural programs where interpreters may perform numerous noninterpreting tasks (Fitzmaurice, 2017; Saenz & Langdon, 2019). Specialized training for both interpreters and school staff is recommended to address these issues (Alani et al., 2024; Langdon, 2020).

The ASL interpreting profession has evolved significantly, transitioning from informal practices to a regulated field with established codes of ethics and certification processes (Stewart et al., 1998). Interpreting is now viewed as a practice profession requiring situational judgment and consideration of human interaction factors beyond technical language skills (Dean & Pollard, 2014).

Interpreters often navigate expanded roles and responsibilities, including cultural mediation, clarifying directions, facilitating peer interactions, and addressing contentious expectations among stakeholders (Kotzé, 2014; Wadensjö, 2017). Power dynamics, ethical considerations, and cultural nuances are intrinsic to the multifaceted responsibilities of ASL interpreters (Holtz, 2014; Russell & Shaw, 2016).

ASL interpreters play a critical role in bridging communication gaps for DHH students and fostering meaningful inclusion in educational settings (Seal, 2004; Stewart et al., 1998). Although their responsibilities often extend beyond direct language transmission to include tasks like cultural mediation, scaffolding, and classroom interaction management, the lack of standardized roles and inconsistent training pose significant challenges (McDermid, 2020; RID,

2007; Silva & de Oliveira, 2016). Research has underscored that clearer guidelines, enhanced collaboration with teachers and other school professionals, and specialized training are necessary to support interpreters and improve educational outcomes for DHH students (Alani et al., 2024; Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b; Brimm, 2018).

The Intersecting Roles of TODs and ASL Interpreters

TODs and ASL interpreters play vital roles in supporting DHH students within educational settings. Although their primary functions differ, TODs primarily focus on teaching and interpreters facilitate real-time communication, they share several important similarities that enhance the educational experience for DHH learners.

Both TODs and ASL interpreters prioritize effective communication, which is essential for the academic success of DHH students (Luckner & Carter, 2001; Seal, 2004). TODs directly teach language and speech skills, helping students develop their abilities (Dorn, 2019; Furness et al., 2019; Luckner & Carter, 2001), while interpreters ensure students can access spoken language by translating it into ASL as needed (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001b; RID, 2007; Stewart et al., 1998). Collaboration is key in both roles (Alani et al., 2024; Brimm, 2018). TODs work alongside general education teachers to adapt strategies and accommodations tailored for DHH students (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Vaughn, 2003), and interpreters coordinate with educators to ensure interpreting aligns with classroom goals and dynamics, fostering a more integrated approach (Ott et al., 2020; RID, 2007).

Both TODs and interpreters advocate for inclusive participation (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Seal, 2004). TODs engage in coteaching and consultations (Friend & Bursuck, 2006) and interpreters bridge communication gaps, allowing DHH students to connect with peers and teachers (Ott et al., 2020). TODs provide tailored direct instruction that addresses academic

and social-emotional needs (Dorn, 2019), while interpreters often go beyond their core role to promote peer interactions and clarify instructions (McDermid, 2020; Silva & de Oliveira, 2016).

Both professions encounter challenges related to role definition and evolving expectations (McDermid, 2020; Seal, 2004). Understanding Deaf culture is crucial for both roles (Seal, 2004; Stewart et al., 1998). Both require specialized training and ethical practice to serve DHH students effectively (Dean & Pollard, 2014; RID, 2007). Enhancing collaboration and clarifying roles will help TODs and interpreters work toward their shared goal of fostering a supportive, inclusive learning environment (Alani et al., 2024; Brimm, 2018).

Teacher of the Deaf Preparation Programs

TODs are labeled as highly qualified educators as defined under IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2002). Although specific certification requirements vary by state, TOD licensure in the United States is typically tied to completion of a master's program in Deaf Education or a related field. For instance, Washington University's MS in Deaf Education leads directly to certification, and state licensure authorities often require master's-level preparation as part of educator qualifications. The variance lies mostly in the philosophy of the TOD preparation program. Teacher preparation programs for deaf education have evolved significantly over time.

While early programs emphasized speech and hearing-focused (oralist) methods, today the vast majority include comprehensive curricula that address visual communication, bilingual/bicultural pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and cultural responsiveness. For example, Lenihan (2010) found that only 11 out of 65 programs used an oralist model, with most adopting visual or bilingual–bicultural approaches; Engler and MacGregor (2018) described current programs that integrate diverse instructional methods and culturally situated teaching

practices. Three main types of programs exist: LSL, comprehensive, and bilingual–bicultural (Dolman, 2008; Jones & Ewing, 2002).

The Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) serves as a pivotal national accrediting body that sets, promotes, and monitors standards for teacher preparation programs for educators of DHH students, ensuring alignment with research and cultural responsiveness (CED, n.d.; Lenihan, 2010). In collaboration with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), CED certification represents the highest benchmark for professional practice in deaf education (Easterbrooks & Stephenson, 2012).

Currently, a range of institutions boast CED-accredited TOD preparation programs, including the University of Arizona; California State University, Fresno; California State University, Northridge; Flagler College; University of North Florida; Eastern Kentucky University; McDaniel College; Fontbonne University; Missouri State University; Washington University in St. Louis; National Technical Institute for the Deaf; Teachers College, Columbia University; University of Science and Arts–Oklahoma; Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania; University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Lamar University; The University of Texas Health Science Center–San Antonio; and Utah State University (Council on Education of the Deaf [CED], n.d.).

The standards set forth by the CED for teacher preparation programs were revised in February 2019, encompassing various essential components. These include curriculum requirements for core programs at the provisional certification level, expectations for faculty involved in core programs at the initial level, candidate admission criteria for core programs at the initial level, necessary resources and facilities to support core programs at the initial level, and the evaluation, review, and planning processes for core programs at the initial level (Council on Education of the Deaf, 2019).

CED is an active member of the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, collaborating with notable organizations such as the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, the American Academy of Audiology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery, and Directors of Speech and Hearing in State Health and Welfare Agencies. This collaboration underscores CED’s commitment to advancing the field and advocating for best practices in educating DHH individuals (Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, 2019).

Comprehensive TOD programs are grounded in a comprehensive philosophy that intentionally links program philosophy, coursework, and field experiences to prepare preservice teacher to meet the diverse needs academic and communication needs of DHH students. Enger and MacGregor (2018) describe comprehensive programs as those that embrace the diversity of deafness and emphasize differentiated instruction across multiple communication approaches, whether spoken or signed so that teaching adapts to the student’s language and access needs. In these programs, theory and practice are connected through reflection, clinical practice, and collaboration to better produce teachers who demonstrate professional commitment, instructional proficiency, and cultural responsiveness. Bilingual-bicultural programs similarly highlight the importance of dual language development and cultural identity to emphasize ASL and English literacy (Humphries & Allen, 2008), while translanguaging approaches extend this foundation by addressing language deprivation and promoting flexible communication practice that draw on linguistic resources available to students (Musyoka, 2023). Building on these perspectives, comprehensive preparation aims to equip preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively across settings and language needs (Engler & MacGregor, 2018; Luckner & Carter, 2001). Consistent with professional standards, such programs integrate

diverse pedagogical approaches, cultural awareness, practicum, collaboration with colleagues, continuous professional development, advocacy and policy, and ongoing assessment and evaluation (Council on Education of the Deaf, 2019; Easterbrooks & Stephenson, 2012).

Research on deaf education teacher preparation programs (DETP) has found significant similarities and differences among programs (Easterbrooks & Stephenson, 2012; Lenihan, 2010). Findings show wide variance in approaches, including curriculum structure, program philosophy, pedagogical methods, and certification requirements. Practicum requirements ranged from as few as 15 to as many as 300 hours, and coursework in audiology and listening technology also varied greatly (Lenihan, 2010). Commonalities included core programming in ASL; however, some programs required ASL V while others required only ASL I (Lenihan, 2010). Research indicates that few programs explicitly address working in teams with ASL interpreters, an oversight that can contribute to role tension and unclear expectations (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Seal, 2004). Although researchers note the need for greater standardization of evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for DHH students (Easterbrooks & Stephenson, 2012; Luckner & Carter, 2001), it is important to remember that DHH learners are supported by multidisciplinary teams and that understanding team roles can ultimately enhance student support. The number of undergraduate programs has declined while emphasis on sign language proficiency has grown (Dolman, 2008). There is also a growing need to prepare teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse Deaf students (Cannon & Luckner, 2016).

This stark difference in each educational philosophy directly impacts DHH students' opportunities to learn from their teacher and make academic progress. For example, a TOD who graduates from an LSL-focused program and is hired in a public school may lack both the cultural knowledge and ASL proficiency needed to effectively teach students who use ASL as

their primary language (Seal, 2004). Research has consistently highlighted the importance of direct communication in ASL for Deaf students' learning. Studies have shown that DHH students learn more effectively when taught directly in ASL by fluent teachers, especially Deaf teachers, compared to instruction delivered indirectly through an interpreter (Kurz et al., 2015; Marschark et al., 2005, 2011).

However, despite increased awareness, ASL is still not extensively used in classrooms (T. L. Humphries et al., 2012). Many teachers use simultaneous communication, which often results in ungrammatical representations of both English and ASL (Hyde & Power, 1991; Marmor & Petitto, 1979). The inability to communicate directly with students places a requirement on many hearing TODs to rely heavily on ASL interpreters for classroom instruction (Seal, 2004). This over-reliance often means that the teacher cannot provide consistent direct modeling and feedback in both ASL and English, which is essential for the bilingual development and language access of DHH students. T. L. Humphries et al. (2012) argued that such dependency is rooted in a lack of ASL proficiency and limited cultural competence in many teacher preparation programs, emphasizing the need for a paradigm shift toward bilingual models that prioritize direct ASL communication whenever possible. Smith and Ramsey (2004) further demonstrated how Deaf teachers' fluent use of ASL creates more authentic, accessible classroom discourse, supporting deeper student engagement and self-advocacy.

Building on this, it is vital that hearing teachers develop strong ASL linguistic skills, a nuanced understanding of Deaf cultural norms, and flexible collaboration practices so that they can share the responsibility for communication access equitably with interpreters instead of shifting the entire burden. Additionally, the importance of hiring qualified and certified interpreters is emphasized to ensure that communication between teachers and students remains

clear, ethical, and pedagogically effective (RID, 2007). When interpreters are fully credentialed and professionally supported, they can more confidently maintain appropriate role boundaries and contribute to a collaborative learning environment that truly meets the diverse language needs of Deaf students.

Historically, various terminologies have been used to describe approaches focused on spoken language development for DHH children that do not rely on manual communication systems such as sign language. With advancements in auditory technology, the term listening and spoken language (LSL) has emerged as the prevailing designation for communication modalities centered on auditory perception and speech production (Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, n.d.; Estabrooks et al., 2020). The foundational principles of LSL and auditory-verbal education were conceptualized and promoted by organizations like the AG Bell Academy and related practitioners (Estabrooks et al., 2020).

Core tenets of LSL include: (a) early identification of hearing loss and prompt implementation of listening technology to maximize auditory input; (b) consistent audiological management and the use of LSL as the primary communication mode; (c) creation of acoustically supportive environments; (d) caregiver training to reinforce LSL development at home; (e) individualized lesson planning to build listening and spoken language skills; (f) collaboration with parents and professionals to set and achieve developmental goals; (g) encouraging children to self-monitor through active listening; (h) use of diagnostic teaching to assess progress and adjust objectives; and (i) advocacy for inclusive education within mainstream classrooms alongside hearing peers (Dornan et al., 2010; Estabrooks et al., 2020; Moeller & Tomblin, 2015). These principles collectively aim to create a robust framework that

supports DHH learners' integration into spoken communication environments while promoting their linguistic and social development.

TODs trained in LSL programs engage in a multifaceted process that emphasizes the importance of language development, evidence-based pedagogical strategies, and creating a rich language environment that supports students in both academic and social domains (Estabrooks et al., 2020; Moeller & Tomblin, 2015). A primary component of LSL programs is the strong focus on implementing research-backed methods to facilitate spoken language acquisition (Estabrooks et al., 2020; Hogan et al., 2008). As an educational philosophy, LSL prioritizes the development of spoken language skills in DHH students by maximizing the use of audition through hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other listening devices (Estabrooks et al., 2020; Knoors & Marschark, 2012).

Proponents of LSL argue that with modern advances in hearing technology, DHH students now have greater opportunities to develop spoken language skills comparable to their hearing peers (Moeller & Tomblin, 2015; Swanwick, 2015). Research in this area underscores that early and consistent exposure to spoken language can lead to improved language outcomes for DHH children (Knoors & Marschark, 2012; Swanwick, 2015). Hoffmeister and Caldwell-Harris (2014) emphasized the critical importance of establishing a fluent first language for cognitive and academic success; in the context of LSL, this first language is typically spoken language developed through auditory-verbal therapy approaches (Rhoades, 2013).

ASL Interpreter Preparation Programs

The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) was established in 2006 to enhance and promote professionalism among ASL interpreters via accreditation of interpreter preparation programs (IPPs). Modeled similarly to accreditation systems for training TOD,

CCIE's mission includes accrediting IPPs, developing and updating interpreter education standards, ensuring high-quality program development, advancing field-wide best practices, and promoting the application of knowledge, skills, and ethical standards in professional interpreting education (CCIE, n.d.).

The 2019 Accreditation Standards for Interpreter Education, established by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE), provide an extensive framework for evaluating and developing interpreter education programs within the United States and Canada (Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education, 2019). These standards aim to ensure academic rigor and program quality, thereby enhancing professional practice in the field. The standards address program quality, institutional commitment, student support, faculty standards, curriculum design, field experience, outcomes and evaluation, and program improvement and sustainability. In associate and bachelor degree IPPs, students develop the skills and knowledge essential for interpreting in ASL and English contexts, with a strong emphasis on linguistic proficiency and cultural competence to facilitate accessible communication between Deaf and nonsigning individuals (Seal, 2004). One of the primary focuses of interpreter preparation programs (IPPs) is the development of bilingual proficiency in ASL and English (RID, 2007). Research shows that the quality of interpreting is often influenced by the amount of training received, with evidence suggesting that more hours of training correlate with fewer errors in interpreting (Nicodemus et al., 2014).

Cultural competence is a critical component of interpreter training. Programs often incorporate coursework that addresses the cultural nuances and social contexts of both the Deaf community and the hearing world. The curriculum also includes ethical considerations and legal

aspects of interpreting, preparing students to handle sensitive situations appropriately (Dean & Pollard, 2013; RID, 2007; Seal, 2004).

IPPs often integrate practical experiences, such as internships or supervised interpreting practice, to enhance students' skills in real-world settings. These experiences allow students to apply their theoretical knowledge and develop their interpreting skills in diverse contexts (Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education, 2019; Seal, 2004). Cognitive aspects of interpreting, such as working memory and executive function, are also emphasized in programs, as research indicates that high cognitive skills are predictors of interpreting performance, suggesting that programs should incorporate training to enhance these skills (Hervais-Adelman et al., 2015; Macnamara & Conway, 2016).

The National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE) established its Educational Interpreter Code of Ethics in 2021 (see Table 1), outlines the professional standards and ethical responsibilities of educational interpreters. This code emphasizes core values such as student autonomy, confidentiality, impartiality, professionalism, ongoing development, and cultural competence (NAIE, 2021). It reinforces the interpreter's role in supporting DHH learners through ethical, inclusive, and culturally respectful communication practices within educational settings.

Table 1

Interpreter's Code of Ethics

Ethical principles for interpreters in education	Description
Accuracy	The educational interpreter faithfully renders the message from the source language into the target language.
Confidentiality	The educational interpreter keeps all information obtained while interpreting confidential except when required to disclose information because of organizational policies or as mandated by law.
Impartiality	The educational interpreter remains objective and unbiased and does not express personal beliefs or give advice to the parties.
Professional conduct	The educational interpreter acts in a manner that reflects the highest standards and best practices of the profession.
Professional development	The educational interpreter commits to consistently improving and broadening their knowledge and skills through professional development.
Representation of qualifications	The educational interpreter provides an accurate representation of their credentials and of their relevant training and experience, along with truthful professional references.

The NAIE Code of Ethics serves as a guiding framework for educational interpreters, outlining professional standards and ethical responsibilities essential to their role. It emphasizes the importance of confidentiality, professional competence, cultural awareness, impartiality, respect, collaboration, ethical decision-making, and advocacy (NAIE, 2021). Adherence to these

principles is critical for promoting effective communication and supporting the educational success of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

ASL IPPs are increasingly vital for supporting ASL interpreters in diverse educational settings. These programs help meet the growing demand for qualified interpreters by ensuring language proficiency, interpreting skills, and specialized knowledge in the field, encompassing both service and scholarship (Jacobowitz, 2005; Nicodemus et al., 2014). A study summarizing the National Task Force on Educational Interpreting found that educational interpreters, teachers, administrators, teacher educators, parents, and deaf clients expressed concerns about the lack of preparation for collaboration (Hurwitz, 1995). Following the passage of PL 94–142, it became clear that interpreters' roles were inconsistently defined and often misunderstood by administrators, teachers, and parents. Few interpreters had formal training for educational contexts and were sometimes mistaken for classroom aides. The report emphasized that interpreters must be viewed as essential team members to effectively support DHH students. Vague job descriptions continue to cause role ambiguity, impacting student success (Hurwitz, 1995; McDermid, 2020; RID, 2007; Seal, 2004). The Task Force identified critical needs for clearer standards, improved working conditions, and advanced training for educational interpreters, needs that remain relevant today.

Another study conducted by Smietanski (2016) explored the causes of role ambiguity in secondary educational interpreting by collecting written survey responses and comparing two groups to identify characteristics contributing to role decisions. The results found that many educational interpreters serve dual roles, both as ASL interpreters and as tutors, despite this being contrary to professional best practices (RID, 2007; Seal, 2004). Such dual roles can increase role strain and confusion, potentially leading to less effective interpreting and hindering

student success. Smietanski's (2016) study highlighted that educational interpreting is not one-size-fits-all; without clear role definitions, ambiguity will continue to affect staff and students alike.

In *Understanding Roles and Responsibilities of American Sign Language Interpreters in Educational Settings*, Chamberlain (2021) explored how general education teachers, interpreters, and practicum interpreters perceive their roles in schools using survey data to identify commonalities. Findings showed that stakeholders generally understood the interpreter's responsibilities in facilitating communication, sharing information, and following school policies, but the level of support and understanding was inconsistent. Teachers often wanted more support but were unclear about interpreters' specific roles. Research continues to highlight the need for clearer role definitions and training for teachers and interpreters to foster effective teamwork, which could significantly enhance student learning outcomes (Chamberlain, 2021; RID, 2007; Seal, 2004).

Improving preparation strategies and standardizing approaches could enhance the quality of interpretation across various contexts (Nicodemus et al., 2014; Shaw & Roberson, 2009). Research shows that many interpreter program graduates feel unprepared to work in legal, healthcare, and educational settings (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Rosen, 2006). Graduates have reported limited coursework addressing educational interpreting and a lack of clear guidelines on their roles in classrooms (Dahl & Wilcox, 1990; Seal, 2004). Studies have consistently highlighted the lack of standardization in interpreter education nationwide, even among experienced practitioners (Nicodemus et al., 2014; RID, 2007). Although uncommon, some institutions have begun to integrate bilingual and deaf education approaches to better prepare interpreters for diverse student needs (T. L. Humphries & Allen, 2008). Overall, these

findings underscore the need for more comprehensive and standardized training to improve preparation for interpreters and educators alike.

Extensive research underscores the critical role that ASL interpreters play in educational settings, providing DHH students with essential access to communication and learning opportunities (Berge & Ytterhus, 2015; Chamberlain, 2021; L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; RID, 2007; Seal, 2004; Smietanski, 2016). Although facilitating communication is the primary role of educational interpreters, research has shown that their responsibilities also include clarifying instructions, supporting peer interactions, and tutoring (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001a; Brimm, 2018). Interpreters also collaborate with teachers and special educators to enhance the learning process and classroom environment (Brimm, 2018; L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004) and advocate for DHH students while providing cultural insights into the Deaf experience (Ott et al., 2020; Seal, 2004). While the interpreter's role can vary depending on the educational setting, there is an ongoing concern that DHH students may become overly reliant on interpreters rather than engaging directly with their teachers (Russell, 2005; Seal, 2004). Overall, despite persistent role ambiguity and the need for clearer communication and expectations, research emphasizes that interpreters must actively collaborate and engage in teamwork with educators to ensure effective communication access and meaningful participation for DHH students (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; RID, 2007).

Gaps in Research

The collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters is an essential area that has received relatively limited attention in research (L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Prinzi, 2022; Seal, 2004). Engler and MacGregor (2018) noted that while comprehensive teacher preparation programs show promise, there is limited research on how they practically foster

ongoing collaborative practice in classrooms. Although the benefits of teacher collaboration for all students are well documented (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2015), this partnership is particularly critical for DHH students. The unique characteristics and needs of these learners, including communication, language acquisition, and social interaction challenges, underscore the importance of effective teamwork within educational settings (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001a; Seal, 2004). Addressing this research gap is vital for enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for DHH students, ensuring they receive the necessary support within a collaborative learning environment (Chamberlain, 2021; Prinzi, 2022).

Although existing literature extensively addresses the working relationships between ASL interpreters and general education staff, support staff, students, and deaf teachers, research specifically examining collaboration between ASL interpreters and TODs in the deaf classroom remains largely absent (Chamberlain, 2021; L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew, 2004; Prinzi, 2022; Seal, 2004). In particular, there is a notable lack of academic research that explores effective strategies for collaboration, concerns that arise from these professional partnerships, and how code-switching practices are navigated within classroom settings (Kurz et al., 2015; Seal, 2004). Addressing these gaps is essential for developing evidence-based practices that strengthen teamwork and communication access for DHH students.

Conceptual Framework: Expanded Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Conducting a Google Scholar search on ASL interpreter and TOD collaboration, I came across a slideshow titled *Brainstorming: Collaboration Between Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Educational Interpreters* by doctoral students Hasko-Dunagan and Weirick (2018). I was ecstatic as it took me days to locate research specific to TODs and ASL education

interpreters and collaborative practices. Not quite knowing what my theoretical framework would be, I knew I wanted to focus on teams and the ability to work effectively with team members as a multidisciplinary field. Though I could not locate a thesis or dissertation, I did scroll through their presentation slides and found Tuckman's (1965, Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development listed as a goal for describing effective group functioning. I found this concept fascinating and matched my end goal.

A quick search in Google Scholar on *Tuckman's stages of group development* yielded 18,100 results, indicating significance in the field of organizations. As I read through articles, I found the number of organizations using teamwork is increasing and it is important to understand developmental phases common of a team to better understand how to work together effectively. Although methods of assessing team processes, specifically group development, are limited, a theory of teams and their developmental process has been outlined. Although I found many studies referencing this model for team development, I wanted to thoroughly understand the historical context of Tuckman and his journey to identifying and later amending to add another stage to his models for teamwork. Through a search on EBSCOhost, I located a thorough literature review on varying perspectives of Tuckman's model. Using Bonebright's (2010) *40 Years of Storming: A Historical Review of Tuckman's Model of Small Group Development*, I obtained a better understanding of the history of Tuckman and his navigation of stages of group development, which will be summarized here.

Bruce W. Tuckman (1938–2016) was an educational psychologist best known for his influential model of group development, forming, storming, norming, performing, first published in 1965 in *Psychological Bulletin*. He earned his Ph.D. in Psychology from Princeton University in 1963, where he studied under Robert Gagné. His dissertation, *Personality Structure, Group*

Composition, and Group Functioning (Tuckman, 1963), investigated how individual personality traits influenced group functioning and was supported by the Office of Naval Research. After completing his doctorate, Tuckman worked as a research psychologist at the Naval Medical Research Institute, where he focused on small group organizational behavior.

It was during this period that Tuckman began categorizing stages of group development based on interpersonal and task functions. Although his initial manuscript was rejected by *Psychological Bulletin* for insufficient quality, he revised it to focus more on the synthesis of existing literature and inferences rather than on extensive citations of individual articles (Tuckman, 1984). His final 1965 article, *Developmental Sequence in Small Groups* (Tuckman, 1965), became widely cited and remains foundational in teamwork research.

In addition to his work on group development, Tuckman published several books on conducting educational research, evaluating instructional programs, and educational psychology. He was the founding director of the Walter E. Dennis Learning Center at The Ohio State University, where he helped students improve academic motivation and achievement (Tuckman, 2003). He served as executive editor of *The Journal of Experimental Education* and contributed to journals in career development and educational research. In 2004–2005, he was elected to the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association (Bonebright, 2010). His enduring legacy includes not only the stages of group development but also significant contributions to how educators design and assess instruction.

Tuckman's Developmental Sequence in Small Groups

Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, outlined in explicit stages, was first conceptualized in the 1960s to explain how effective teams develop over time. Tuckman emphasized that merely placing people in a group does not guarantee teamwork or collaboration;

instead, teams do not begin as effective, high-functioning units but rather move through distinct stages. In reviewing 55 articles on group development, he identified two key dimensions: group structure and task activity. From these, he coined four stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Later, an additional stage of adjourning was added to describe the disbandment of teams (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Tuckman's model remains widely used in both academic and professional contexts (Bonebright, 2010), though critics argue that the proposed developmental stages are not strictly linear but may repeat or overlap in practice (Wei et al., 2020).

Forming

The Forming stage is the initial phase when a group comes together. Members often feel uncertainty and anxiety as they get acquainted with the task and each other. Ground rules, expectations, and boundaries are established, and members start to test interpersonal dynamics. Leadership roles begin to emerge as members seek guidance and clarification. Tuckman (1965) described this stage as marked by orientation, testing, and dependency.

Storming

The storming stage is characterized by intra-group conflict and resistance. As members assert their individuality, they may challenge group norms, roles, or authority. Emotional tension is common, and disagreements about procedures or goals can surface. Tuckman (1965) noted that this phase is critical because it allows members to address differences that, if left unresolved, can hinder group cohesion later.

Norming

During the norming stage, the group begins to develop closer relationships and a sense of cohesion. Roles and norms become clear, trust deepens, and conflict is reduced as members

accept the group's structure. Harmony and open communication improve morale and help maintain focus on tasks. As Tuckman (1965) observed, members start to express constructive criticism and provide mutual support, fostering a more productive climate.

Performing

The Performing stage is when the group reaches optimal functioning. Members work collaboratively and interdependently to solve problems, make decisions, and achieve goals. Role flexibility and shared leadership are evident, and the group can redirect energy away from managing interpersonal conflict toward accomplishing tasks efficiently. Tuckman (1965) emphasized that not all groups reach this stage, but those that do demonstrate high levels of autonomy and productivity.

Adjourning

In 1977, Tuckman and Mary Ann C. Jensen revisited the model and added the adjourning stage (sometimes called mourning). This addition emphasized that groups are not permanent structures but instead come to an end when their tasks are fulfilled. The adjourning stage highlights the need for reflection, closure, and recognition of accomplishments. It also addresses the emotional impact of separation, especially for groups that have developed strong cohesion and trust (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Scholars have since emphasized the importance of planned disbandment to help members transition successfully to new roles or groups (Bonebright, 2010).

Autoethnography as a Framework and Method

Autoethnography is an often underused qualitative method but has gained traction in the field of education in recent years. Its emphasis on analysis and reflection can support teachers and students in examining their personal cultural identities and their interactions within educational environments (Plakhotnik, 2020; Starr, 2010). This approach has also become

increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for exploring teamwork and collaborative processes. By deeply reflecting on personal experiences, researchers can offer diverse perspectives and insights into the functioning of multidisciplinary team dynamics (Ratnapalan & Haldane, 2022). Within deaf education, where students have diverse needs and educational teams include a growing number of professionals, it is essential to examine daily interactions, teamwork, and collaborative practices. Specifically, the collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters remains under-researched, with best practices yet to be clearly defined. This area of study is significant because TODs come from diverse teacher preparation programs, which directly impact their ability to meet the needs of a varied student population.

Building on these foundations, researchers have increasingly turned to critical interpretive autoethnography as an approach that not only analyzes personal experience but also interrogates the cultural, institutional, and systemic forces shaping those experiences. While traditional autoethnography often focuses on storytelling and self-reflection, the critical interpretive lens situates the researcher's narrative within broader contexts of power, privilege, and identity (Adams et al., 2015; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). In the field of deaf education, this approach can illuminate the complexities of teamwork between TODs and ASL interpreters by exposing how professional roles, preparation pathways, and institutional norms affect collaboration and, ultimately, student outcomes. By combining personal reflection with systematic analysis and critique, critical interpretive autoethnography provides a powerful method for generating new insights and advocating for more equitable and effective practices within multidisciplinary teams.

Summary

The importance of teamwork in professional identity and collaborative practice has long been recognized, yet how teams develop and function in real educational contexts remains complex and, at times, underexplored. Tuckman's (1965) foundational model of group development, later expanded to include the adjourning stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977), provides a useful framework for understanding how teams move from formation to effective performance. Decades later, scholars like Bonebright (2010) have reaffirmed the model's relevance while also noting its limitations, such as its assumption of linear progression. In the context of deaf education, where multidisciplinary teamwork is essential, applying a critical interpretive autoethnographic lens (Adams et al., 2015; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014) can help uncover how Teachers of the Deaf and ASL interpreters navigate these stages in practice. This approach can shed light on where collaboration thrives, where it falters, and what structural or cultural factors may support or hinder effective teamwork for the benefit of DHH students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I'm just the para.

I'm just the interpreter.

I'm just . . . just . . . just . . .

Barely. Minimum. Just . . .

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to critically examine my experiences as a signing, hearing teacher of the deaf (TOD) collaborating with American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in a self-contained deaf and heard of hearing (DHH) classroom. Through a critical interpretive autoethnographic lens and guided by Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development including the later addition of the adjourning stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977), this study sought to illuminate how my daily collaborative practices align with or diverge from established group development stages. This research also explores how my background as a graduate of a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program shapes my ability to navigate role clarity, shared decision-making, and professional relationships with interpreters. By situating my personal reflections alongside the perspectives of ASL interpreters, I aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities, successes, and tensions inherent in this professional collaboration. Ultimately, this study contributes to the limited research on TOD–interpreter teamwork and offers insights to strengthen preparation programs and support equitable educational outcomes for DHH students.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer three research questions.

1. What are my experiences collaborating with ASL interpreters in a DHH self-contained classroom?
2. In what ways do my experiences reflect or diverge from the group development stages described by Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977)?
3. In what ways does my background as a graduate of a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program impact my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters within a self-contained DHH classroom?

Qualitative . . . Really Professor?

My journey towards embracing qualitative research has been humbling and transformative. When I first began graduate school, I was deeply skeptical of qualitative methods, perceiving them as a less rigorous alternative to quantitative approaches. I had dismissed qualitative research as a sway to compensate for a lack of numerical data, viewing it more as a story with little credibility. This perspective reflected my limited understanding of the depth and rigor involved with qualitative inquiry.

I vividly recall a moment in 2018. Sitting in a cramped classroom with pale-white walls, an aging projector, and just a handful of single-arm desks squeezed into the space, I felt a mix of anticipation and apprehension. Our cohort of six graduate students were grappling with the daunting task of refining our research topics - required for graduation. For the three of us, finding a focus that felt meaningful and manageable felt like an enormous undertaking as at that time, I mistakenly believed that our work needed to revolutionize the field entirely, a burden of expectation that clouded my perspective - leaving me often frozen in the task ahead.

Our professor entered the room, radiating a quiet authority rooted in years of research, specially with children utilizing cochlear implant technology. Joining the discussion was the

professor's colleague whose advocacy for quantitative methods was in stark contrast to our professor's passion for qualitative research. As they considered the merits of each approach, I found myself curious as to the various research methodologies. I wondered if qualitative research held the same weight as the precision of quantitative data. This exchange planted a seed of curiosity.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has often been viewed as a lesser form of inquiry, with varying perspectives on its nature, purpose, users, methodologies, and scientific value. These differing views shape how qualitative studies are designed and how their findings are applied in practice (Cypress, 2015). While qualitative research methods began gaining a foothold in nursing in the 1960s and 1970s, they were initially met with skepticism and caution. It was not until the 1980s that qualitative health research more fully emerged as a recognized mode of inquiry (Sandelowski, 2004).

Broadly defined, qualitative research refers to any approach that produces findings not derived from statistical procedures (Borbasi & Jackson, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It uses a naturalistic approach to understand people's lives, stories, and behaviors, and is underpinned by various theoretical perspectives, including constructivist–interpretive, critical, postpositivist, poststructural/postmodern, and feminist paradigms (Ingham-Broomfield, 2015). In contrast to quantitative researchers, who aim to predict, control, and generalize, qualitative researchers allow phenomena of interest to emerge naturally within real-life contexts (Patton, 2001). By focusing on exploration and rich description, qualitative researchers immerse themselves in the detailed, contextual world of participants' experiences, relying on interpretive understanding and trustworthiness rather than statistical generalization (Golafshani, 2003). Common qualitative

research designs include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative inquiry, case study, and qualitative descriptive research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethnography focuses on the systematic study of people and cultures in their natural settings. It relies on immersive observation and participation in the daily lives of those being studied to gain a deeper understanding of social practices, beliefs, and interactions within specific cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Chang (2016) defined autoethnography as a research method that merges the principles of ethnography with autobiography, positioning the researcher as both the subject and the observer. This approach emphasizes the researcher's personal experiences and reflections as a lens to examine broader cultural and social phenomena (Adams et al., 2015). Reflexivity is essential to this approach, allowing researchers to critically interrogate their own biases, emotions, and positionality to enhance the authenticity and credibility of the research (Ellis et al., 2011). Chang (2016) outlined four core assumptions of autoethnography: (a) culture is a group-oriented concept in which the self is always connected with others; (b) reading and writing self-narratives offers a lens through which both the self and others can be explored and understood; (c) sharing one's story does not inherently create cultural understanding, such understanding emerges through cultural analysis and interpretation; and (d) autoethnography can serve as an effective instructional tool, helping social scientists and practitioners such as teachers, counselors, and healthcare professionals develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others. Finally, Chang distinguished autoethnography from other self-narratives such as autobiographies, memoirs, and personal essays by emphasizing that while these forms share elements of personal storytelling, autoethnography extends further by systematically analyzing and interpreting cultural contexts and connections (Adams et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2011).

Gaps in Literature

It is evident that research in deaf education offers a wealth of valuable information and insights but a significant gap exists in defining roles of all members of the deaf education team, specifically around those in a self-contained program. I delved into my university's library database, searching broad phrases, and carefully narrowing my search to seek experiences and best practices surrounding teachers of the deaf and ASL interpreters, especially in the deaf education room. Using search terms "deaf education" surfaced over 80,000 articles, covering a variety of topic. I encountered studies around the history of deaf education, best instructional practices, student experiences, and the ongoing debate around the controversial topics of listening spoken language compared to ASL. Amid the overwhelming amount of literature, I gave up after 100 or so articles, rewording my search phrase to "deaf education teamwork" only surfaced 218 results, none directly focused on the specific collaborative dynamics between TODs and ASL interpreters.

My personal story within the intricate realm of deaf education is rife with emotion, challenging my approaches and experiences in working with ASL interpreters. Given the scarcity of exploration among TODs and ASL interpreters, as well as the contentious relationships and philosophies within TOD preparation programs, I seek to illuminate the rationale behind my decision-making. My aim is to elucidate my perspective and convey the genuine challenges of being a hearing–signing teacher working alongside professionals who have not been taught how to collaborate effectively, despite graduating from their program as "the experts."

Autoethnography, as defined by Ellis et al. (2011), is the practice of delving into one's own experiences to gain insight into broader cultural contexts. This approach enables the autoethnographer to critically analyze their roles and experiences through reflexivity, which is

central to establishing credibility in qualitative research (Adams et al., 2015). Autoethnographic studies are valuable for examining the complex relationship between the individual and their surrounding society or culture, offering perspectives that traditional methods may not fully capture (Itoi, 2018).

In this study, I aim to deepen my understanding of myself, the decisions I make within my classroom, and my collaboration with my ASL interpreter colleagues, moving beyond simply documenting daily interactions to analyzing them within a broader cultural and systemic context (Chang, 2016). Before beginning formal data collection, I will engage in deep self-reflection and journal my current views on collaboration, including perceived systemic barriers. This approach aligns with the tradition of analytic autoethnography, which seeks to connect personal narratives with broader social theory through systematic analysis (Anderson, 2006). An autoethnographic framework can be a powerful tool for examining team dynamics, uncovering nuanced insights into interpersonal relationships, power structures, and the emotional contexts that shape teamwork (Adams et al., 2015; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). According to Poerwandari (2021), self-reflexivity enables a more comprehensive understanding of social context, illustrating how individual experiences influence team dynamics and interactions in ways that can enhance team effectiveness and functionality.

Hesitancy of Study

Working in a low-incidence field as a hearing teacher certainly brings its challenges, especially given the scrutiny that comes with the role. I understand that many in the deaf community may have reservations about hearing educators, often perceiving us as wanting to “fix” or “cure” their deafness within the education system. It is crucial to me that I approach the educational, social–emotional, and language needs of my students with compassion and respect.

To ensure I provide the best support, I actively collaborate with deaf professionals, remain informed about the latest research from Gallaudet and other experts, and invite members of the deaf community into my classroom. This practice not only enriches my students' experiences but also allows them to connect with deaf role models and explore their own identities. I deeply value these interactions and aim to create an inclusive environment where every student feels understood and empowered.

I have participated in numerous workshops focused on educational interpreting throughout the Midwest, where I have encountered a palpable sense of frustration and anger from interpreters directed towards TODs. I vividly recall my first experience at a conference specifically for ASL interpreters and TODs. It was striking how quickly the atmosphere shifted; the session became overshadowed by a cascade of charged comments and blame aimed at the TODs.

Interpreters expressed their feelings of distrust, sharing concerns like, "TODs don't trust me" and "they don't let me do my job effectively." Many interpreters voiced that they felt excluded from discussions, missing vital information about the students they were serving, which left them feeling undervalued. They lamented, "They don't involve us or share crucial insights," and "They don't truly understand the complexities of what we do." The conversation spiraled, with frustrations spilling over as interpreters shared their collective experiences.

As a preservice teacher attending this conference, I thought perhaps this was a reflection of just a few individuals' experiences. Surely, I thought, other districts must be different. However, I was swiftly confronted with the reality that these sentiments echoed across many settings, revealing a much larger issue within our field.

The workshop was conducted by a highly regarded ASL interpreter, known for their extensive experience and strong reputation in the field. They passionately advocated for the importance of aligning interpreting practices with the specific needs of clients. However, I observed that having an interpreter lead the session did not effectively bridge the gap between the two professions. This became particularly evident to me as I have been attending an increasing number of workshops, especially in 2024, where I sensed a growing tension and frustration among interpreters and teachers of the deaf.

The underlying emotions were palpable; it felt as though the interpreters were not simply harboring animosity toward TOD for its own sake. Rather, it seemed to stem from deeper feelings of anger and trauma related to their work experiences. They were genuinely striving to ensure that DHH students received the support they deserved, which made witnessing this divide all the more heartbreaking.

Despite my determination to excel in my role, I sensed that I had to validate my capabilities even before proving my worth in practice. To better understand the complexity of this dynamic, I made a conscious effort to connect with more interpreters, listening to their perspectives and experiences. This journey of building relationships opened my eyes to the challenges they face, further illuminating the intricate layers of our collaborative efforts.

In December 2024, I convened with my research committee to present my proposed methodology, focusing on the crucial dynamics between teachers of the deaf and ASL interpreters. During our meeting, I shared the rich background of my own experiences in teaching and collaborating with interpreters, emphasizing how these interactions have profoundly shaped my current teaching practices.

I have a strong desire to include insights from other interpreters I have worked with, as I believe it's important to acknowledge both the challenging realities I have faced and the mistakes I have made throughout my career. However, I found myself hesitating, particularly due to the contentious atmosphere surrounding this field in the Midwest. The existing research on the relationships between teachers of the deaf and ASL interpreters—especially those who are signing teachers—appears to be quite limited, which heightened my concern about the platform I choose to address these issues. I worried about potential backlash and how my honesty could negatively influence my professional standing.

As I reflected on these challenges, I realized it would be more appropriate to concentrate on the positive rapport I have established with one particular ASL interpreter. This focus does not diminish the fact that I have many constructive relationships with ASL interpreters; rather, it serves as a baseline for my study. Given the negative and sometimes traumatic experiences I have encountered in various workplaces, I believe it is vital to shine a light on what is working well. My hope is that by doing so, I can inspire others in the field to explore and develop positive practices and best practices for collaboration between these two critical roles.

Setting

Information in Chapters 1 and 2 highlighted the lack of standardized educational background and training among teachers of the deaf when it comes to providing direct communication-based instruction. Due to the low-incidence student population and high variability among students, this research aims to focus on personal perspectives and experiences within the instructional setting for students who are DHH.

This study will take place in a midwestern public sixth to eighth grade middle school in which a partnership exists between a special education district and the general education

partnership school. The special education school district partners with approximately 700 organizations, businesses, universities, associations, and institutions throughout this Midwest region. As the researcher in this study, I am employed, trained, and evaluated by the special education district but work within the partnering school district to provide special education services to students who are DHH.

For the 2023–2024 and the 2024–2025 academic year, I supported DHH sixth to eighth grade students within the same building and classroom. This classroom is shared between me as the TOD and a DHH paraprofessional; however, for the duration of this study, the paraprofessional will not be present. The setting for this autoethnographic research will be set within my DHH classroom, specifically a class titled “DHH science skills” created by the general education principal, designed to provide tailored instruction that aligns with each student’s IEP goals. Creating a scope and sequence and using the general education science curriculum, I ensure that although students in sixth to eighth grade are in one class, each student will be taught the same skills as their hearing peers in general education environments, but content scopes and sequences may be presented out of order so that students are not taught the same topics yearly. For example, the general education scope and sequence plans cells and body systems in eighth grade, but may be taught in sixth grade so that the eighth graders may continue their current progression of topics.

The DHH students in this class have identical areas of need in vocabulary acquisition, requiring explicit instruction at a slower pace using language acquisition strategies and best practices. The students’ language assessments demonstrate significantly below grade level proficiency for their age group, regardless of their communication modality.

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, I will teach multiple classes for DHH learners in Grades 6 through 8. This includes DHH English language arts (ELA) offered daily, DHH learning strategies every other day, two sections of science classes offered every other day, and a short class called community. Community is a 32-minute class, offered Tuesday through Friday, used in the DHH settings for supporting individualized IEP goals, typically addressing advocacy and executive functioning. This class supports students in creating and tracking goals, tracking grades, and advocacy social stories. In addition, required general education character development presentations are given during this time in conjunction with DHH-specific presentations on individual team member roles, advocacy, communication skills and repair strategies, and exposure to deaf language models and professionals in the county.

A variety of factors were considered when determining the most appropriate class for this study. Factors considered included heterogenous and homogenous language communication modalities among classes and roles of interpreters for students. For example, students with severe language deprivation need more scaffolding during the interpreting process where students with more residual hearing use the interpreter more as a reference point or clarifier than the direct and consistent facilitation of language. Confidence in instructional materials and methods was another aspect for consideration. A novel is utilized for DHH ELA and the interpreter has a copy to take home for review and to prepare. More complex subjects require the interpreter to be flexible due to the amount of information covered, the need to provide a fair representation of what is being discussed in the classroom, and the desire to track student progress.”

DHH ELA was considered for this study, but rejected as the amount of skills to be taught, assessed, and monitored becomes increasingly challenging and, at times, feels rushed. DHH ELA

is the only class offered daily. I teach DHH ELA 5th hour where all the students utilize ASL, making justification of a study in this class difficult to justify and not truly indicative of a typical environment with a signing TOD and ASL interpreters. This class is also offered 8th hour, but a TOD colleague and I coteach, combining both classes. The communication modalities offer an environment where TODs and ASL interpreters must work collaboratively together, making the variables challenging to mitigate.

DHH learning strategies was considered but, similar to the 5th hour DHH ELA, the communication modality remains consistent. The only time an ASL interpreter is truly needed is when I am reading a novel aloud, as I cannot sign and read simultaneously. If this class was chosen for this study, it would be inaccurate, as I would never choose to voice in a signing classroom if I am able to directly communicate with students. Conversely, if I chose to sign to the class, the ASL interpreter would be voicing for no one.

The community class was considered, but the time frame was way too short. Often, community is comprised of guest speakers that discuss their roles as interpreters, teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, audiologists, speech language pathologists, required school presentations, and minilessons on IEP goals. These variances make it challenging to collect and thoroughly reflect on current collaborative processes between TODs and ASL interpreters. In addition, ASL interpreters switch out during community for scheduling equity. This would lead to unreliable and possible invalid results.

Science was considered as the majority of students attending the DHH science class had comparable IEP goals such as: by *date*, the student will improve their receptive vocabulary skills by identifying the correct vocabulary word when provided with 4 options with 80% accuracy as measured by curriculum-based assessments or teacher-created tests and by *date*, the student will

improve their expressive language skills by identifying a missing vocabulary word when provided with context clues and a word bank with 75% or higher accuracy as measured by curriculum-based assessments or student work samples. These goals are important and indicated from vocabulary and language assessments. Like my 8th hour DHH ELA, two ASL interpreters are scheduled in the class. One interpreter signs while the other voices the students' responses, taking turns as needed. This arrangement ensures that all students with their diverse educational, language, and behavioral needs have equal access to the same information.

Because this research aims to highlight teamwork between TODs and ASL interpreters, I needed to acknowledge the reality that roles in a DHH classroom are, at times, unclear, complex, and not always well-defined and that certain situations can make these role boundaries even more fluid or challenging to navigate. I chose to situate this study in a classroom where communication modalities are comparable and where I as the TOD would require the ASL interpreter to be more actively involved. This is especially important because the students in the class experience language deprivation and have different levels of language acquisition, as well as varied experiences with language instruction due to the diverse backgrounds of the TODs they have worked with.

Participants

The participants in this study include two ASL interpreters certified through the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) and myself, a certified TOD. We had already collaborated in a DHH science classroom serving students in Grades 6 through 8. Prior to the 2024–2025 school year, our experience working together was limited: we had attended the same workshop at a local college, and one of the interpreters had once substituted for another interpreter at our school during the 2023–2024 school year.

The two interpreters moved to the middle school from an elementary school along with a large group of fifth-grade students transitioning to sixth grade. This influx of students made it necessary for more interpreters to join the middle school team. In this district, the process for relocating interpreters due to changes in student numbers and needs starts with volunteers and then follows reverse seniority. Because the two interpreters were newer to the district, they were assigned to move while more senior interpreters remained at the elementary level. Of the 12 students transitioning to sixth grade, seven require ASL interpreting services, which led to the addition of five ASL interpreters at the middle school for the 2024–2025 school year. One interpreter from the 2023–2024 school year requested to return to the elementary school instead.

Interpreter scheduling varies by district and building. For the 2024–2025 school year, an interpreter point of contact (POC) met with the ASL interpreters before the students' return to review upcoming schedules. The POC collected each interpreter's preferences—such as whether they prefer working in DHH or general education settings, specific subjects, student language modalities, and the number of different content areas—although these preferences are not guaranteed. The POC also gathered input from the four TODs based on factors like prior positive working relationships, student feedback, and student language needs. Since I had not worked with these two interpreters before, I did not have feedback to share at the start of the year.

The two ASL interpreters were not selected based on certification level or prior experience but rather on classroom setting and student composition, as interpreting workload and roles are determined by students' needs. Given the students' varied communication modalities and levels of language acquisition, these participants were well suited for this study. Additionally, our limited prior experience working together made our collaboration and navigation of roles a more authentic focus for this autoethnographic research.

Due to the low-incidence nature of the population involved in deaf education, recruiting participants and subjects for this study was challenging. As discussed in Chapter 2, TODs often come from diverse backgrounds and hold different educational philosophies shaped by their teacher preparation programs. To help control for these variables, participants were required to be currently employed as an ASL interpreter currently interpreting for students within my DHH self-contained classroom. Individuals not currently meeting these criteria were not eligible to participate in this study.

Participant Job Descriptions and Background

As a signing TOD, I had completed ASL I, II, III as well as several core classes at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield, Missouri from 2008–2010. Following that, I transferred to Missouri State University and obtained my bachelor's degree in communication science and disorders with a concentration in deaf education. I also received an associate's degree upon completing all the necessary credits. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in 2018 and pursued a master's degree in communication sciences and disorders with a major in deaf education at Missouri State University (MSU). As part of my graduation requirements, I completed a practicum at MSU's DHH preschool, accumulating 124 clock hours. Additionally, I gained experience through 150 clock hours at Holland Elementary and 250 hours of student teaching at Jarrett Middle School in Springfield, Missouri, under the supervision of certified TOD with at least 5 years of teaching experience as a TOD.

At the time of my attendance, MSU was a Council on Education of the Deaf (CED) accredited teacher preparation program. CED accreditation is nationally recognized and founded on the core competencies in special education established by the Council for Exceptional Children (Council on Education of the Deaf, 2022). It enforces specific standards for teachers of

the deaf. It is important to note that not all TOD preparation programs are accredited by the CED.

MSU's program offered both undergraduate and graduate degrees in communications science and disorders with a focus on education of the deaf and hard of hearing. The philosophy of the teacher preparation program was comprehensive, aiming to prepare preservice TODs to provide high-quality services to the diverse population of DHH students.

TOD graduates from MSU were expected to fulfill similar course requirements as their peers in general and special education, including classes in reading, mathematics, and an introduction to teaching. Beyond these foundational courses, I completed two classes in language and speech development, auditory habilitation, instructional strategies, counseling in deaf education, and reading development related to the field of deaf education. Additionally, I completed ASL I, II, III, and Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE) I and II.

MSU's education of the DHH program places significant emphasis on practical learning. This included 1 semester of observing, collecting data, and analyzing language in MSU's onsite preschool program, 1 semester of teaching two lessons per week in the preschool, 1 semester of practicum in a classroom supervised by a certified TOD with at least 5 years of experience, and 1 semester of student teaching under the supervision of a certified TOD.

To gain interpreter background information, each interpreter was prompted in email with the following prompts a) certification levels b) name of school attended c) states in which currently certified d) length of time in interpreting field e) interpreting experiences and f) any additional information they would like to share about their background.

Interpreter 1 holds a Board for Educational Interpreting (BEI) Basic and scored a 3.9 on the The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). This interpreter graduated

from Florissant Valley Community College and Southwestern Illinois College, and is certified to interpret in Illinois and Missouri. This interpreter has four years of experience and has had most interpreting experience in the K-12 educational setting. They have some experience interpreting in the community including business meetings, theater, church, and other settings. While waiting to become certified and licensed in MO, they continued to take the Advanced Placement Practicum class through Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC). As a student, they completed over 450 practicum hours, in a variety of settings before becoming certified and licensed in MO. After becoming licensed, in addition to working full-time they also completed two separate Deaf-led mentorships: one specifically in Educational Interpreting.

Interpreter 2 holds a BEI basic and scored a 3.9 on the EIPA. This interpreter graduated from SWIC and is certified in Illinois and Missouri. This interpreter has been working as a certified interpreter for six years. This interpreter has the majority of experience in educational interpreting, but has a wide range of experience outside of the K-12 educational setting including interpreting experience in post-secondary settings, performance, theatre, business meetings, and in many community settings. This interpreter began the interpreting program in 2016 and upon graduating had over 350 practicum hours as a student. The summer before their second they sought out an internship with a deaf run business in St. Louis where they worked with a fully deaf staff 2-4 days a week in order to gain exposure to the deaf community as well as the language. After graduating, they passed their EIPA quickly and began working but continued to take Advanced Practicum in order to gain experience and continue working towards BEI certification. They spent the first couple of years as an interpreter gaining experience in many different schools, Illinois and Missouri, where they learned to navigate a variety of work dynamics. Job descriptions for each participant are provided in Appendix A and B.

Research Design

This study employed a critical-interpretive autoethnographic approach to examine my personal experiences with collaboration and teamwork alongside two ASL interpreters in a self-contained DHH science classroom. Through a self-reflective lens, and drawing on my perspective as a signing TOD who graduated from a comprehensive teacher preparation program, I analyzed our daily classroom interactions to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of collaboration between these two professional roles. Given the limited research specifically focused on the collaborative dynamics and role navigation between ASL interpreters and Teachers of the Deaf in classroom settings, and the growing presence of ASL interpreters in mainstream educational contexts, this study aims to highlight and describe effective strategies for fostering successful teamwork between interpreters and TODs, with the goal of informing future practice, policy, and research in deaf education.

My initial introduction to the concept of autoethnography occurred during my research methods graduate class, where I initially reacted with skepticism. I perceived autoethnography as a method that could be viewed as an evasion of the rigorous and well-researched topics prevalent in today's educational discourse. As I skimmed through the foundations of autoethnography, I interpreted "culture" at its most basic level, considering my role as a hearing TOD students or contemplating how art has told a story over the years. While I recognize the importance of these perspectives, I struggled to see their relevance to my work until I unpacked what I interpreted as the unspoken secrets among TODs and ASL interpreters. As I began to deeply contemplate the conflict within this field and shed light on its frustrations, it became clear to me that I truly was an "other" in this context. This realization sparked my interest in exploring the dynamics of my position further.

Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that describes and systematically analyzes personal experience to better understand cultural contexts (Ellis et al., 2011). Data derived from autoethnographies can deepen our understanding of the social connections between individuals and their communities (Chang, 2016; Fakhrian & Luardini, 2022; Gregersen, 2022). Autoethnography requires the “turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur” (Denzin, 1997, p. 227). In other words, the researcher is always positioned in the context of “others.” I had never fully considered that my role as a hearing, signing teacher working closely with ASL interpreters would position me as an “other” observing this complex phenomenon. However, with limited research available in this field, pursuing an autoethnographic approach seemed like a fitting first step.

Chang (2016) provided an in-depth exploration of autoethnography as a qualitative research method, describing it as encompassing multiple orientations, including descriptive/self-affirmative, analytical/interpretive, and confessional/self-critical elements. The descriptive/self-affirmative dimension emphasizes the researcher’s personal experiences as a means to celebrate and acknowledge their identity, culture, and community. In this approach, researchers engage in deep self-reflection and storytelling to articulate and affirm their unique identities while fostering a sense of connection to their cultural roots.

In contrast, analytic or interpretive autoethnographies delve deeper into the significance of personal narratives by interpreting and analyzing the researcher’s experiences within broader societal contexts (Anderson, 2006; Chang, 2016). Researchers using this approach critically engage with their own histories and identities through various theoretical lenses, such as feminist theory, critical race theory, or postcolonial theory. This method often includes a comprehensive

literature review that situates personal experience within wider academic discourse, highlighting the interplay between self and larger conceptual frameworks.

The final category, confessional or self-critical autoethnography, adopts an introspective and vulnerable tone (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2011). This approach invites researchers to confront and share their shortcomings, mistakes, and ethical dilemmas, ultimately seeking to unravel the intricate complexities that shape their identities and experiences. By encouraging an examination of personal biases and assumptions, this category fosters a critical awareness of power dynamics and personal accountability within the research process (Chang, 2008; Wall, 2008).

Critical Analysis

Understanding the different methodological approaches within qualitative research is crucial for grasping the unique contributions of critical-interpretive autoethnography. Much like the term *qualitative research*, autoethnography encompasses a wide range of interpretations and applications that can vary significantly based on purpose and theoretical lens (Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011). In general, qualitative research emphasizes a deeper understanding of human experiences and social phenomena through nonnumerical data. This approach prioritizes context, meaning, and subjectivity to gain insights into participants' experiences and the cultural significance embedded in those experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A defining aspect of critical-interpretive autoethnography is the practice of sustained, rigorous self-reflection that not only examines the researcher's personal experiences but situates them within broader cultural, institutional, and systemic contexts (Adams et al., 2015; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). This level of reflexivity compels researchers to interrogate their own beliefs,

assumptions, and biases while critically analyzing how these perspectives influence and are influenced by the communities they serve (Chang, 2016).

Engaging in critical reflection can also lead to transformative insights. Priddis (2015) emphasizes that intentional, self-critical inquiry can shift a researcher's perspective, bridging the connection between personal narrative and larger cultural discourses. Similarly, McMahon and McGannon (2017) described critical reflection as a catalyst for questioning dominant narratives and stimulating new avenues for examining personal and professional tensions.

Despite my lived experiences and moments of frustration within this field, I initially struggled to identify a methodology capable of articulating the nuanced dynamics between TODs and ASL interpreters. Literature focusing specifically on the collaboration and relational tensions between these two roles remains limited, even though underlying feelings of ambiguity, mistrust, and role confusion are often palpable in practice (Cogen & Cokely, 2015).

In my search for deeper insights, I conducted a comprehensive literature review as part of a graduate course and reached out to local interpreter preparation programs (IPPs) for professional perspectives. Of the three institutions I contacted, two responded with compelling observations. One former program director highlighted the strong regional influences of auralism and oralism still prevalent across the Midwest, noting how these historical paradigms may contribute to persistent disconnects between teachers and interpreters. This director also provided an overview of the historical evolution of ASL interpreting, emphasizing the shifting models that have shaped practice over time (J. H. Humphrey & Alcorn, 2001). Another program director agreed, pointing out that current educational materials insufficiently address best practices for interpreting in deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) classrooms, particularly in contexts where the teacher is a fluent signer. Together, these insights underscore the urgent need for a more

integrated and critical approach to preparing both teachers and interpreters, fostering a shared understanding that can bridge systemic divides and support more effective collaboration in practice.

The field of deaf education extensively utilizes quantitative data and qualitative narratives for interpreters, TODs, and students, but there is a notable lack of research on the working relationships between TODs and ASL interpreters. To establish a foundation for this area of study, employing autoethnography allows for valuable discussions and insights from a TOD working with ASL interpreters. Given the scarcity of information on collaborative processes between these two roles, study participants can offer a more balanced perspective on the true nature of collaboration within the classroom. As a signing TOD, I understand that I am not a certified interpreter, and ASL is not my first language. In a classroom setting with various complexities such as language deprivation, the use and functionality of assistive technology, different sign language dialects, and multiple communication styles, the involvement of an ASL interpreter is beneficial for facilitating student-to-student, teacher-to-student, and student-teacher communication.

Data Collection

Triangulation is a methodological approach in which researchers enhance the credibility and validity of their findings by using multiple perspectives, data sources, or methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 1978). In the context of critical-interpretive autoethnography, triangulation serves as a vital tool for addressing the subjectivity inherent in personal narratives while enriching the analysis of cultural and social phenomena (Adams et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2011). By employing triangulation, researchers can uncover previously unrecognized insights, promoting a thorough and reflective understanding of others and providing a more

comprehensive analysis of individual experiences situated within broader contexts. Furthermore, triangulation allows researchers to engage with diverse data sources, which enriches narratives, deepens interpretation, and enhances the trustworthiness of collaborative or co-constructed research (Crumb et al., 2023). Critical autoethnographers can utilize multiple forms of triangulation to strengthen their work. For this critical-interpretive autoethnography, I intend to combine various qualitative methods—including fieldnotes, structured interviews, and member checks—to build a richer, more credible account of my collaborative experiences.

Video Journals

Video journals serve as the primary method of capturing the researcher's daily reflections following each science class with the two ASL interpreters. At the end of each lesson, a video journal is recorded to document immediate experiences and insights. Notes taken during class periods highlight specific topics to reflect on, such as challenges, successes, emotions, and responses to collaborative interactions with the two ASL interpreters. These journals offer a narrative account of lived experiences, capturing the nuanced realities of teamwork.

Chang (2016) emphasized the importance of self-observation in autoethnography, noting that it can be documented in multiple ways depending on the researcher's context and needs. While a rigid structure is not always required, planning a clear format can expedite data recording and enhance clarity during analysis. In this study, self-observation will involve recording immediate thoughts, actions, and interactions as they unfold, providing real-time insights into classroom dynamics and the collaborative processes between the two ASL interpreters and the hearing-signing TOD. Real-time self-observation will help capture nuanced moments that might otherwise be overlooked, supporting a richer and more authentic narrative (Adams et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2011).

Structured Interviews

Weekly structured interviews were conducted with the two ASL interpreters to gather their perspectives on the collaborative dynamics within the classroom. Guided by Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, with the later addition of the adjourning stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977), these interviews included tailored questions informed by my background as a hearing, signing TOD. Interpreters were encouraged to note observations throughout the week and bring them to the interviews to aid recall and support deeper reflection. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the stages of teamwork and the nuances of collaboration.

Group or paired interviews are common in ethnographic research because they enable researchers to engage in participant observation while learning from participants in their own words (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). In autoethnography, interviews serve to provide external data that can confirm, complement, or challenge introspective findings (Chang, 2016). As an autoethnographic researcher, I focused on our shared experiences, leveraging structured interviews to gather collective perspectives on our team's collaboration. While group interviews may sometimes inhibit openness due to peer influence or vulnerability, they also foster interaction and dynamic information exchange. Structured interviews rely on preplanned questions to maintain focus and ensure fidelity to the research questions and methods. Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, I have framed interview questions to elicit responses that align with the stages of teamwork, while acknowledging the fluidity, overlaps, and possible misalignments that can emerge across forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

First, the ASL interpreters were prompted with open-ended questions about their perspectives, which lead to more specific questions and follow-up about specific instances. The general open-ended questions were:

1. What were some notable moments for you in the classroom this week?
2. How would you describe the overall dynamic between yourself as the ASL interpreter and me as the signing-hearing TOD?
3. What challenges or successes have stood out to you this week?
4. Are there any observations or thoughts you'd like to share before we dive into specific questions?

These interview questions were designed using the principles of each group development stage from Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development, including the adjourning stage added by Tuckman and Jensen (1977).

Forming:

1. How did the team members establish roles during this lesson?
2. What were your initial thoughts about collaboration between the TOD and interpreters?

Storming:

1. Were there any challenges, conflicts, or unanticipated challenges that arose during the lesson? How were they addressed?
2. How did the teacher and interpreter provide feedback to each other during the lesson (verbal and nonverbal)?

Norming:

1. What norms or routines were evident in fostering collaboration during the lesson?

2. How did the teacher and interpreter coordinate efforts to support student understanding and access to language and content?

Performing:

1. In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement and learning during the lesson?
2. What strengths, skills, or strategies did each participant bring to the success of the lesson?

Adjourning:

1. What reflections did the participants share following the lesson regarding collaboration?
2. How might participants apply what they learned to improve future lessons?

Participation Dates

The duration of this study spanned from March 3, 2025, to April 4, 2025, and took place in a self-contained classroom for DHH students, specifically during third-hour science. On Monday, March 3rd, classes were of shorter duration; hence, the science class lasted approximately 45 minutes due to the district's schedule. This allows for an 8-period day, permitting all courses to be conducted within a single day. In contrast, other third-hour science classes occur on odd days, with each session lasting 84 minutes. Both March 4, 2025, and March 5, 2025, comprised classes of 84 minutes each. The first week of this study included a total of 213 instructional minutes. On March 10, 2025, and March 12, 2025, which were also odd days, the total instructional time equaled 168 minutes. The district observed Spring Break from March 14, 2025, to March 21, 2025, resulting in a shortfall of 45 minutes in week 2. Instruction resumed on March 24, 2025; however, the researcher was absent, leading to the omission of

personal journaling for that day. On March 26, 2025, the class met for a full duration of 84 minutes, while March 28, 2025, was a half day with class lasting only 22 minutes. The total instructional time for week 3 amounted to 106 minutes. Week 4 included a session on Monday, March 31, 2025, lasting 45 minutes, followed by 84 minutes on April 1, 2025, and another 84 minutes on April 3, 2025. ASL interpreters were present for all scheduled research days.

Research Timeline

To ensure that data collection, reflection, and analysis are systematic and feasible within the realities of a functioning classroom, a clear research timeline was developed. The timeline outlined in Table 2 aligns with the IRB-approved study dates, the school district calendar, and the instructional schedule for the self-contained science classroom. By outlining each phase in detail, the timeline demonstrates how the critical-interpretive autoethnographic approach was carried out in practice, ensuring that data collection, member checking, and thematic analysis flow logically and ethically throughout the duration of the study.

Table 2*Research Timeline*

Phase	Dates	Activities
Preparation & rapport building	March 1–3, 2025	Obtain electronic consent from participants; finalize lesson plans; meet with interpreters to review study goals, procedures, confidentiality, and debriefing process.
Data collection	March 3–April 4th, 2025	Record reflective video journals after each science class (12 total lessons); conduct one structured interview per week with both ASL interpreters (4 total interviews); collect relevant documents (job descriptions, PD materials).
Spring break pause	March 17–21, 2025	Review initial reflections and interview transcripts; begin preliminary coding to identify emerging themes.
Data analysis & member checks	April 1–4, 2025	Complete final video journals and any remaining interviews; conduct member checks with interpreters to confirm interpretations; continue coding and thematic analysis using Tuckman’s Stages of Group Development.
Wrap-up & reporting	Through April 4, 2025	Draft initial findings and narratives; prepare data for final write-up and presentation

Institutional Review Board Approval

This study was reviewed and approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the protection of human subjects and compliance with ethical research standards. Approval was granted under IRB Protocol Number IRB-12619, with the official data collection period set for March 1, 2025, through April 4, 2025, to accommodate the district’s spring break schedule. Informed consent was obtained from all participants in

accordance with university policies and federal guidelines for human subjects research. All confidentiality measures, data storage procedures, and member checking processes described in this methodology were conducted as outlined in the approved protocol to protect participant privacy and uphold the integrity of the research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this critical-interpretive autoethnography followed a systematic, multi-layered approach using both open and hybrid coding strategies. Initial open coding was applied to interpreter interviews, researcher journals with margin notes, and relevant documents to capture concepts that reflected the experience of collaboration for the interpreters and myself as the researcher and TOD. Following this, a hybrid coding phase combined inductive insights with a deductive structure framed by Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. Codes were reviewed and reorganized to align with Tuckman's stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning while preserving language drawn directly from participant dialogue. Triangulation was implemented through comparison of these three data sources (a) interpreter interview transcripts, which provided external perspectives on team dynamics; (b) researcher's reflective journals and margin notes, which documented internal reflections and evolving interpretations; and (c) document analysis, which included job and role descriptions and professional development opportunities offered by the school district for the 2024-2025 school year. Convergence and divergence across these sources were analyzed to explore how collaborative dynamics evolved over time and how they aligned or diverged from each other.

Video Journal Analysis

Video journal entries will be analyzed using the hybrid coding approach. In the first phase of inductive open coding, I will review each journal entry line by line to identify recurring words, ideas, and reflections of how collaboration unfolded over time. This open coding process will prioritize staying close to the data and allow patterns to emerge organically without being shaped by preconceived categories. In the second deductive phase, I will examine open codes through the lens of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, categorizing entries according to their alignment with each stage. This hybrid coding process illuminates how collaboration will develop dynamically and reveal the contextual factors and interpersonal shifts that shape teamwork over time.

Document Analysis

Relevant documents, including district job descriptions for TODs and ASL interpreters within the school district and records of professional development attended by both the TOD and ASL interpreter roles, were reviewed to provide contextual background on the expectations, strategies, and approaches shaping collaborative practices. By examining these, the autoethnographic researcher discusses the context within which these occur in the classroom and district-sponsored supports that better inform collaborative processes.

Job descriptions for TODs, located in Appendix A, and interpreters, located in Appendix B, were examined to assess role clarity, focusing on how the outlined responsibilities align with collaborative teamwork. Professional development records were analyzed for evidence of training that supports teamwork and collaborative strategies. These documents will also be evaluated through the lens of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development to explore how their context aligned or misaligned with the framework's stages.

This analysis offered a foundational understanding of the systemic influences on collaboration, highlighting areas where expectations and practices either complement or conflict with observed dynamics.

Table 3 illustrates the professional development offered by the school district, including the name of the professional development session, date, and target audience. Asynchronous interpreter professional development is outlined in Appendix C.

Table 3

DHH Professional Development Participation Summary

Training name	Date	Attendees
District Convocation	August 14, 2024	TODs & Interpreters
District Equity Training	August 14, 2024/Canceled	TODs & Interpreters
District Assessment Refresher	August 15, 2024	TODs Only
Interpreter Start of Year	August 15, 2024	Interpreters Only
Data Teams	September 11, 2025	TODs Only
GoReact Tasks	September 11, 2025	Interpreters Only
Data Teams	October 10, 2025	TODs Only
GoReact Tasks	October 10, 2025	Interpreters Only
IEP Content	October 25, 2024	Interpreters Only
Communicating Assertively with Others	November 5, 2024	TODs & Interpreters
Collaboration for Student Success	November 5, 2024	TODs & Interpreters
Data Teams	December 11, 2024	TODs Only
Go React Tasks	December 11, 2024	Interpreters Only
Asynchronous Classes	December 20, 2024	Interpreters Only
IEP review in Qualtrics	January 3, 2025	TODs Only
Cell Phone Survey and FAQ		
Introduction of Vocabulary		
Instruction & Proactive Management Tips		
PLC Time		
Non-Manual Signs Review	January 16, 2025	Interpreters Only
GoReact Tasks	January 29, 2025	Interpreters Only
Data Teams	January 29, 2025	TODs Only
Data Teams	February 13, 2025	TODs Only
GoReact Tasks/TBD	February 13, 2025	Interpreters Only
Sped Process Modules	February 14, 2025	TODs Only
Individual Modules	February 14, 2025	Interpreters Only
Ethical Conduct: Understanding Due Diligence and Being Reflective Practitioners	March 28, 2025	Interpreters Only
AI & the Evolution of Interpreting: Ethical Considerations and Allyship	April 8, 2025	Interpreters Only
Teacher Planning/State Test Prep/Work Time	April 8, 2025	TODs Only
Data Teams	April 17, 2025	TODs Only
GoReact Tasks	April 17, 2025	Interpreters Only
Data Teams	May 7, 2025	TODs Only
GoReact Tasks	May 7, 2025	Interpreters Only

Interview Analysis

Structured interpreter interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using the same hybrid coding approach. In the first phase of inductive open coding, I will carefully review each transcript line by line, assigning descriptive codes to participants' words and phrases that reflect their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of collaboration. This open coding stage prioritizes the language and perspectives of the interpreters to naturally emerge from the data. In the second deductive phase, I will examine these open codes through the lens of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, categorizing and interpreting the data according to how collaborative behaviors align or diverge from Tuckman's stages. This hybrid coding process will enable me to capture the interpreter's voices and the theoretical patterns shaping collaboration over time.

Triangulation of Data Sources

Data triangulation will be used to strengthen the credibility, validity, and depth of this study's findings. Video journal entries with margin notes, structured interpreter interviews, and relevant documents will all be coded using the same hybrid coding process, which involves inductive open coding followed by deductive analysis using Tuckman's stages. The resulting codes and themes will then be compared across all sources. This multi-perspective analysis will reveal both areas of convergence and divergence. Triangulating data will ensure that findings are not confined to a single perspective but reflect the evolving nature of collaboration among all participants. Applying the same hybrid coding process consistently across all data sources will enhance analytical coherence, allowing patterns to be traced more precisely and thereby strengthening the trustworthiness of the data interpretations.

Convergence and Divergence Analysis

Patterns of convergence and divergence across data sources will be documented and reflected upon. Analysis will highlight areas of strong agreement, such as shared perceptions of teamwork dynamics, and discrepancies that point to key issues or areas for further investigation for the future. Particular attention will be given to how these patterns illuminate the stages of teamwork and the impact of the researcher's background on collaborative practices.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, providing a theoretical lens for interpreting data. This framework allows for a systematic exploration of teamwork dynamics, focusing on role clarity, conflict resolution, and effective collaboration. By integrating personal narratives, interpreter insights, and document-based evidence, this study offers a thorough examination of collaborative practices between signing-hearing TODs and ASL interpreters providing services to multilingual and modal DHH students within the DHH classroom. This triangulated approach to data collection and analysis ensures a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the research questions, revealing strengths and complexities of collaborative relationships among signing-hearing TODs and educational ASL interpreters.

Positionality Statement

As a signing-hearing TOD, my professional identity and lived experiences deeply influence this research. I embody two distinct roles: that of an insider, immersed in the phenomenon of collaboration with two ASL interpreters, and an outsider, purposefully analyzing and reflecting on emotions, behaviors, decision-making processes, and feedback from

interpreters. This dual role necessitates a reflective and transparent approach to ensure authenticity, vulnerability, and credibility.

I approached this study with the belief that collaboration between signing–hearing TODs and ASL interpreters is critical to supporting DHH students most effectively. My background includes a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders, with a concentration in Deaf Education, including the completion of conceptually accurate signed English I and II, as well as ASL I, II, and III. This foundation shapes my perspective on teamwork and communication and is complemented by my commitment to fostering inclusive learning and working environments.

Throughout my professional career and journey, I have engaged in close working relationships with both TODs and ASL interpreters. Acknowledging the importance of cohesive teamwork, I approach this research with deep respect and dedication for each role within our DHH team and community. As a graduate of a comprehensive TOD preparation program accredited by the CED, I have observed the disparities in the overall preparedness of professionals from different training backgrounds. These disparities influence readiness to work with diverse learners and staffing roles, such as ASL interpreters, which impacts student outcomes and team cohesiveness.

The challenges and role ambiguity within the mainstream DHH educational settings highlight the importance of this research. The driving force behind this study stems from my realization that collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters requires exploration to identify positive strategies that promote effective communication and relationships. As someone actively making instructional decisions in my classroom for my students’ IEPs, I strive to create an environment grounded in collaboration, support, and effective feedback.

Acknowledging my positionality also requires an awareness of potential biases, which is essential for ensuring reflexivity and trustworthiness in autoethnographic research (Adams et al., 2015). While embedded in the dynamics under study, I aimed to balance self-reflection with an open-minded exploration of alternative perspectives. This research informed by my desire to understand and improve collaborative practices, ensuring they align with the shared goal of empowering DHH students and align with my school district's core values: commitment, equity, and collaboration. By drawing attention to these considerations, I aimed to conduct a study that is relevant and reflective of the experiences and viewpoints involved in teamwork.

Summary

This study's critical-interpretive autoethnographic design integrates reflective video journals, structured interviews, and document analysis to examine the collaborative dynamics between a signing-hearing TOD and two ASL interpreters in a self-contained DHH science classroom. Grounded in Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, the design uses triangulation to enhance trustworthiness and to capture multiple perspectives on teamwork, role clarity, and systemic factors that influence collaboration. By combining personal narrative, interpreter insights, and contextual documents within a well-structured timeline, this methodology ensures a credible and nuanced exploration of the strengths and complexities inherent in professional partnerships that serve multilingual and multimodal DHH students.

Chapter 4: Results

This study aimed to examine and critically assess the professional and collaborative interactions between me, as the hearing-signing teacher of the deaf (TOD), and my two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter colleagues in a self-contained middle school science classroom. The dynamics were analyzed through the perspective of a signing TOD who graduated from a comprehensive program, using the framework of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development to evaluate classroom interactions. This research emerged from challenging experiences and a perceived power conflict between the professions of TODs and ASL interpreters in a specific school district. Using an autoethnographic research approach, I employed my own professional experiences as both the focal point and analytical lens.

This chapter delves into my experiences as a hearing and signing TOD working alongside two ASL interpreters in a self-contained DHH classroom at the middle school level. This chapter is sectioned into four important sections: (a) personal journal analysis, (b) ASL interpreter interview analysis, (c) convergence and divergence, and (d) connections to research questions. Through an autoethnographic lens, I reflected on the collaborative growth of our team over several weeks, incorporating daily journal entries and personal insights. I applied Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development to outline our team's journey through the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. This chapter addressed research questions:

1. What are my experiences collaborating with ASL interpreters in a DHH self-contained classroom?
2. In what ways do my experiences reflect or diverge from the group development stages described by Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977)?

3. In what ways does my background as a graduate of a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program impact my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters within a self-contained DHH classroom?

Personal Journal Analysis

Following each instructional day, I documented my video personal journals to capture genuine, unscripted emotions and reactions as I experienced them on that day. These personal journals were subsequently transcribed to identify emotional undertones, experiences, and any residual thoughts following each lesson. Once transcribed, I analyzed each journal, utilizing a hybrid coding approach that combined inductive open coding and deductive open coding around Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development was employed to create specific themes without predefining them.

I carefully combed through each journal, generating codes from repeated phrases, emotional moments, instances of realization, and labels that reflected my lived experience. Initially, these open codes were fluid, including terms such as: masking discomfort, stepping back, unspoken tension. As I analyzed more journal entries, I began clustering related codes in search of patterns and posed critical inquiries such as: how do my experiences correspond with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development; and how does my background as a TOD, having graduated from a comprehensive program, influence my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters. From that point, I mapped the emergent patterns into Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, aligning codes with each stage: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. I intentionally chose to preserve the complexity of open coding during the initial phases to honor the nonlinear and often emotional essence of collaboration.

This section consists of four subsections for each daily journal: individual journal analysis, journal synthesis, connection to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, and summary. Each journal analysis includes a table outlining the stages of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, organized by themes identified through open coding, accompanied by a summary from the journal. Additionally, a narrative accompanies each table to provide a deeper understanding of the codes and themes. These narratives are written through an autoethnographic lens, positioning me not only as the researcher but also as a central participant in the experiences described. Rather than distancing myself from the data, I intentionally center my voice, reflections, and emotional responses to make meaning from the events documented. The autoethnographic lens allows for a layered interpretation; it allowed me to examine team dynamics while simultaneously interrogating my own professional growth, values, and evolving relationships with the interpreters. This reflective approach invites readers to view the data not as neutral or detached, but as embedded within lived experience, shaped by context, and filtered through my dual role as a signing TOD and researcher.

Day 1: March 3, 2025

What stands out from this day was not just what happened in the classroom, but how I felt in those moments of reflection. Although my classroom was busy, it was very structured to the trained eye. It was a Monday, which meant we had shorter classes and 8 classes instead of 4; we had a shorter time to get through our routines and vocabulary instruction, and every minute counted. As students trickled in during the passing time, I revisited my lesson plan, ensuring I was prepared for the upcoming interactions and ready to scaffold and differentiate as needed. When the two ASL interpreters arrived, I made a deliberate choice to refrain from what could be

perceived as *assigning* their roles, meaning I did not ask for a specific interpreter to interpret to the full group while the other interpreter supported a student on a one-on-one basis. My intention was to cultivate a professional atmosphere that nurtured their autonomy as capable adults and skilled professionals. I wanted them to feel empowered and respected. This decision felt like a mutual commitment; we were collectively there for the students, ready to meet their needs. I believed this approach demonstrated respect and a commitment to the shared responsibility of meeting student needs through access, removing any barriers that would disrupt instructional time, especially with shortened classes.

Although I respect the role of ASL interpreters, I had to confront the other rationale in that beneath this mask of confident professionalism, I felt discomfort and uncertainty. I hesitated to assign specific roles to the interpreters, fearful that it might come across as an overreach, a form of micromanagement, another reason for conflict. The ASL interpreters might think, “How dare this TOD assign my station? We are interpreters, we know how and when to do our job.” I also found myself grappling with the possibility that, without requesting specific interpreter placement, ambiguity could give rise to miscommunication, a reflection of the early storming elements of our working relationship. I documented my thoughts, stating, “I kind of left it up to them to determine who starts interpreting,” yet, I acknowledged my need to clarify expectations more effectively. Part of being an educator is the trained ability, through experience, to recognize moments that could completely derail classroom instruction. The moment came to fruition when I began signing across the room without informing the ASL interpreters, leading to unintentional confusion. Direct communication with my students is essential, one of the nonnegotiables of my educational philosophy and, as a student turned from the calendar to ask me a question, there was not even a moment for thought. Of course, I answered in their primary language modality of

ASL, but what I had not considered was that this then became inaccessible for other students with varying language modalities. It did not leave the ASL interpreters much room to interpret the conversation, which was a small, yet significant, incident capturing one of the many unplanned situations that can arise in a DHH setting. All I needed was a moment at my desk to pull up materials, but unfortunately, this oversight ended up derailing the procedures and probably led to some frustration for the ASL interpreters. Ironically, while I aimed for seamless communication, I became the cause of a communication breakdown. This little snapshot highlighted the opportunities for improving communication, and it was just the start of our class.

As I reflected on the situation, I found myself grappling with the timing. I wanted to ensure I reviewed the lesson and gathered the materials before the ASL interpreter returned from their calendar duties, and I also wanted to support the student. I realized that this exchange rushed the transition time from actively interpreting during the student-led calendar time, where the interpreters facilitated exchanges between me and the students, to moving into full group instruction, which created confusion. That moment triggered guilt and served as a reminder that in a shared-access environment, every person needs setup time to succeed. I recognized my need to slow down and understand that interpreter support involves assisting several students simultaneously. I could have voiced a transition, such as, when the student asked me a question, I could have responded in sign language. Although that feels awkward, perhaps this would be a better approach.

What deepened this journal entry was my attention to student behavior and student–interpreter interactions. I celebrated a student’s independence when they asked the ASL interpreter for support at the calendar without the usual scaffolding, reminders, and additional prompts. It felt like a breakthrough in student agency. A student independently handed the digital

modulation (DM) system to the ASL interpreter without prompts. This felt like proof that our team's routines were taking hold and our modeling of collaboration was positively influencing the students. I noted, "I initially said [name], you need to confer with your interpreter . . . but the student asked independently this time." That was a powerful win, and one that usually does not take place until later in the year.

Later in the lesson, I shared my feelings of conflict regarding signing compared to voicing. There were times when I signed from across the room without informing the ASL interpreter beforehand. The result was that our listening spoken language (LSL) students missed out on voicing opportunities. I felt a sense of responsibility and frustration for this oversight. This experience felt like a storming moment, marking a tension point where our expectations were misaligned, not due to resistance, but because I was still navigating how to navigate our communication amid unexpected student responses and behaviors with the ASL interpreters?

As we transitioned to a station activity, I felt more confident in my decision-making, knowing that a specific student who used ASL and had significant language deprivation had been working with Interpreter 2 on a one-on-one basis, so I asked each ASL interpreter to work with specific students for one-on-one vocabulary review. These decisions reflected a strategy I was developing in real time as a structure that balanced shared responsibility and supporting student needs and consistency. The students created vocabulary cards, a method that came directly from interpreter feedback. This collaboration between the ASL interpreters and myself was meaningful. This collaboration reminded me that although I was responsible for instructional planning and delivery, our shared feedback was refining instructional approaches for student access. I wrote, "The interpreters had actually given me feedback that they feel like the note cards were more effective than notebooks."

One key takeaway came from the station where students engaged with an EdPuzzle video, signed by one of our ASL interpreter effective practice specialists, allowing them to access content through multiple modalities. I asked one of our ASL interpreters to provide a voiceover for the video to ensure that LSL students could also access and be exposed to sign language. However, I noticed one student struggled to stay focused. I offered the ASL interpreter support, but the student declined. It was not until the student missed multiple questions that I specifically requested the interpreter to offer scaffolded ASL support for the English printed comprehension questions. That moment again called on my judgment—when to step in and when to hold back. I questioned whether preparation materials like videos should be shared in advance, admitting, “I’m wondering if it would be helpful for me to share the video with the interpreters beforehand.” The journal for this day may be found in Appendix D.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Connections

I began my analysis of this Day 1 journal entry by applying open coding to moments of reflection, instructional events, and team dynamics. The first meaningful code to emerge was seating choice. I refrained from assigning roles at the start of class, instead allowing the ASL interpreters to position themselves freely. This example was paired with the codes of startup autonomy and service expectations, forming the theme interpreter autonomy and role ownership. The interpreter autonomy and role ownership theme mapped to the forming stage of Tuckman’s (1965) stages of group development, where roles are explored and participants begin navigating their place within the team. While my intention was to promote trust, I recognized that internal conflict, fear of micromanaging versus the need for clarity, was typical of the uncertainties in this early stage.

Later, I celebrated a key student interaction, coded as student independence, interpreter request, and DM handoff. These codes formed the theme of student-initiated interpreter use. The fact that the student handed over the DM without prompting reflected the evolution and stability of the classroom routines. This aligned with Tuckman's (1965) norming stage, where structure, expectations, and peer modeling promote emerging independence and clarity in behavior norms.

A pivotal breakdown occurred when I began signing across the room without prepping the ASL interpreters. The codes uncoordinated signing, voice voiding, and delayed transitions reflected a disruption in flow. These moments gave rise to the theme of instructional clarity and role ambiguity. This was a defining moment in Tuckman's (1965) storming stage, where clashes in understanding and performance often surface not out of resistance, but from evolving needs and uneven communication expectations.

We regained momentum when the ASL interpreters and I scaffolded vocabulary using notecards. Codes like visual scaffolding, role assignment, and concept clarification emerged here. This developed into the theme of collaborative vocabulary instruction, an indicator of Tuckman's (1965) performing stage. At this point, our efforts were aligned with minimal friction. Collaboration was authentic and naturally embedded in the instruction.

My own questioning of whether I should have shared the video with the ASL interpreters in advance gave rise to codes agenda reflection, video prep, and preview needs. These mapped to the theme reflective planning and anticipatory support, which fit nicely into Tuckman's (1965) norming stage. This stage emphasizes preparation, role clarity, and improved workflow based on shared insight. Tuckman's (1965) stages aligned with the codes, themes, and summary from Day 1's journal entry are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes Derived from Open Coding of March 3, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965)

Stages of Group Development

Tuckman stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Forming	Interpreter autonomy and role ownership	Seating choice, start-up autonomy, service expectations	The interpreters determined their own seating and turn-taking roles at the beginning of class, reflecting mutual respect and early team autonomy.
Norming	Student-initiated interpreter use	Student independence, interpreter request, DM handoff	Students independently initiated interpreter support and device use, suggesting increasing familiarity with support routines.
Storming	Instructional clarity and role confusion	Uncoordinated signing, voice voiding, delayed transitions	Timing mismatches between teacher signing and interpreter voicing created confusion, highlighting areas for clearer role negotiation.
Performing	Collaborative vocabulary instruction	Visual scaffolding, role assignment, concept clarification	Interpreters and teacher collaborated on reviewing vocabulary through note cards and ASL/English alignment activities.
Norming / Performing	Access equity and instructional scaffolding	ASL video, interpreter support, content assessment	The interpreter adjusted proximity and support levels during the Edpuzzle activity to ensure comprehension assessment aligned with content, not English decoding.
Norming	Reflective planning and anticipatory support	Agenda reflection, video prep, preview needs	The teacher reflected on pacing, interpreter prep, and pre-teaching strategies that could improve flow and shared readiness.

Summary

The codes and themes illustrated a nuanced development aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. Starting from the autonomy and role ambiguity of the forming stage, through the tension and disruption associated with storming, and

ultimately reaching the interdependent and reflective collaboration seen in norming and performing stages, this entry highlighted a day characterized by active negotiation, vulnerability, and professional reflection.

Day 2: March 4, 2025

This lesson began with a mix of confidence and uncertainty, a common dynamic in the DHH classroom. We had full student attendance, but Interpreter 1 arrived late, a minor change that affected our team's shared rhythm. Before class started, Interpreter 2 and I met to discuss the day's plan. It was clear we were leaning into the norming stage of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, as we began to meet briefly with structure and clarification of expectations. However, signs of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage were still evident, especially when we discussed one-on-one interpreter placements and the effects on student attention. I mentioned to Interpreter 2 that although their placement benefited one student, it might have unintentionally distracted another. Interpreter 2 had also asked for Interpreter 1's thoughts, indicating that both interpreters were actively evaluating their roles.

While reviewing my lesson plans before class, I noticed that Interpreter 2 was well aware of the day's agenda. I had shared our unfinished tasks from Monday, which included engaging station work, a fun vocabulary review, identifying digestive system organs on the mannequin, and a 3D video that followed food through the digestive system. Even with all our planning, there was a bit of nervous energy in the air. I felt the urge to practice our routines once more, and Interpreter 2 stood right by my side as I went over the expectations during lineup. This may have seemed small, but it spoke volumes. I felt this unspoken understanding that, together, we would reinforce classroom expectations to build consistency. The ASL interpreters were not merely

interpreting; it felt that we were a united front. This moment echoed the theme of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage; we were still in the process of shaping our shared classroom norms together.

As students started their planner procedures, I observed a subtle yet impactful interaction. One student gestured to Interpreter 2 across the room, inviting Interpreter 2 to *come play* and adding a playful, "Please." Interpreter 2 responded with a patient expression and a warm motherly smile, quietly modeling appropriate behavior. This seemingly small moment highlighted the importance of mutual respect and language development in our classroom. I noticed Interpreter 2 naturally stepping into supportive roles when I was not leading calendar time. Interpreter 2 almost seemed to anticipate my plans and next steps. At one point, I realized Interpreter 2 was offering corrective feedback in a way that felt very appropriate. It was not overbearing, nor was it intrusive. However, I still worried if high school staff perceive this behavior as overstepping.

These moments illustrated Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) storming phase, uncertainties regarding boundaries, roles, and future perceptions, and my internal struggle of feeling judged for my collaboration with interpreters. I wrestled with the unseen tug-of-war between following my instincts and anticipating external scrutiny. Although the ASL interpreter appeared genuinely willing to assist me, I remained anxious about how others would view it.

During vocabulary review, I asked Interpreter 2 to act as a signing model between two students. Interpreter 2 supported the students' fingerspelling and made connections between signs and the written word, a role typically filled by a signing paraprofessional, which we currently did not have for this class. Again, I asked myself, "Am I expecting too much?" Their feedback had been positive so far, and their enthusiasm suggested shared ownership. Still, I

wondered, “Would I ask the same things if a supervisor were observing? Would I feel this comfortable?”

I also reflected on a moment when my gesturing may have confused students and Interpreter 2. I had used a visual gesture that mirrored the ASL sign for “pass out [paper],” while voicing instructions. Interpreter 2 clarified the intent, asking, “Are you sure they need two cards per person?” It was an example of the fluidity of the plans and differentiation in our classroom and how even minor miscommunications can impact clarity for student access, leaving students to question who they should look at and how many cards they actually needed.

When Interpreter 1 arrived, I quickly updated her on what she had missed. I felt a responsibility not only to ensure the students were aware of the day’s plans but also to integrate and inform the ASL interpreter. At that point, I introduced a spontaneous activity in which we used classifiers to connect vocabulary with handshapes, as an incidental learning opportunity to support our review of the digestive system on a mannequin, or Becky, as we playfully called it. The students needed to choose the most suitable classifier for the esophagus. Ultimately, the F handshape was selected, and one student enthusiastically demonstrated it with full embodiment. I appreciated how Interpreter 2 trusted me in that moment. She did not ask questions or scrutinize me for not preparing her for this activity; she simply let the spontaneity unfold.

As I looked back on this day, I saw our collaboration as something fluid, dynamic, and deeply rooted in trust. We gracefully moved through Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming and storming stages, balancing between comfort and caution. It takes a lot of courage to admit when you are unsure if you are on the right track. However, Day 2 reminded me of how willing we were to share not just the work but also the risks and the rewards. The ASL interpreters did not just interpret; they adapted, responded, and reflected alongside me. This

way, our teamwork went beyond assigned tasks and blossomed into a genuine act of care for our students and one another.

While I still navigated some feelings of doubt, particularly concerning how others may view our practices and decision-making, I also recognize the strength of the trust we were building together. Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development is not a straight line, and our collaboration beautifully illustrated that. Each moment of Tuckman's forming, storming, norming, and performing stages intertwines with purpose and the unrecognized effort it takes to create a space where language, access, and human connection can truly thrive for students. The journal for this day may be found in Appendix E.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman's (1965) Stages of Group Development Connections

I began coding this journal by identifying consistent patterns of interpreter behavior, student responses, and my own reflections. The first significant pattern led to the theme role fluidity and adaptive support, developed from codes flexible roles, para like support, and team initiative. These codes emerged when Interpreter 2 arrived early and began collaborating, stepping into instructional moments without hesitation and filling in access gaps where needed. This flexibility was not only appreciated but deeply needed. I recognized this behavior as something that fit both between the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming and norming stages. We were still sharing and negotiating expectations but already developed a shared understanding and natural rhythm. Interpreter 2's initiative demonstrated growing trust and mutual support.

The second theme, student empowerment and respectful feedback, stemmed from the codes advocacy, self-advocacy, and language modeling. These were drawn from a moment where a student playfully signed "please" to ask for interpreter support, and Interpreter 2

responded with warmth in a way that modeled respectful boundaries. This act taught students how to request services while respecting the interpreter's role as a professional. This dynamic illustrated Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming stage, in which students internalized classroom culture and routines, and team members, including students, began practicing mutual respect and self-reflection. Interpreter 2's motherly expression was full of kindness while also reinforcing student dignity and respectful communication expectations.

The third theme, instructional coordinator and anticipation, reflected high-functioning collaboration. It was developed from the codes clarification, visual anchoring, and instructional flow. These codes became evident when Interpreter 2 intuitively aligned with classroom expectations and during calendar time. Interpreter 2 was not just interpreting; she was present, responsive, and anticipatory. Interpreter 2 seemed to read both the students and me seamlessly. This kind of fluid partnership shows how we entered Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. Interpreter 2 did not need to ask, "What should I do?" Instead, we moved together in unison that came from lived experiences with each other and mutual trust and respect.

My own internal conflict surrounding how others might have perceived interpreter participation uncovered a set of vulnerable but necessary codes: imposter syndrome, observation anxiety, and trust dynamics. These codes led to the theme of professional vulnerability and reflective practice. I worried whether my decisions would be interpreted as appropriate collaboration or overstepping professional boundaries, especially if a supervisor or colleague from another building observed. Although this internal conflict did not disrupt the lesson, it did point to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) storming stage, where conflict and tensions often arise, not always between team members in an overtly observable way, but within

individuals navigating expectations. At the same time, this internal storming coexisted with parts of Tuckman's norming stage, because it occurred within an environment where I felt safe enough to reflect openly and challenge myself to grow.

The fifth theme, collaborative language exploration, emerged from the codes classifier use, language play, and student creativity. These codes stemmed from a spontaneous moment where I invited students to use ASL classifiers to describe and model the esophagus during a vocabulary review using the classroom mannequin. Interpreter 2 embraced this shift instantly, supporting without hesitation. This spontaneity and flexibility represented Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage, when team members share goals, adapt to unexpected situations, and support each other.

The final theme, direct communication and instructional equity, was derived from codes respecting lanes, multimodal access, and real-time decisions. These codes reflected moments where I prioritized communicating with students using direct communication in ASL, but still relied on interpreter support to ensure all students within the classroom had full access to language. This process was a balance. The interpreters understood my decision-making process and language equity by ensuring I code-switched within class. This kind of mutual understanding showed we were clearly in Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming stage. Roles were respected, communication was fluid, and team members knew when to step in and when to step back. Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages aligned with the codes, themes, and summary from Day 2's journal entry are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Themes Derived from Open Coding of March 4, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965;

Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Forming/norming	Role fluidity and adaptive support	Flexible roles, para-like support, team initiative	Interpreter 2 shifted fluidly between interpreting and instructional support, stepping in when gaps appeared and responding to student needs in real time.
Norming	Student empowerment and respectful feedback	Advocacy, self-advocacy, language modeling	Students practiced requesting interpreters, using 'please,' and receiving correction in a respectful, culturally responsive way.
Performing	Instructional coordination and anticipation	Clarification, visual anchoring, instructional flow	Interpreter actions aligned with instructional pacing, demonstrating shared awareness of class goals and smooth coordination.
Storming/norming	Professional vulnerability and reflective practice	Imposter syndrome, observation anxiety, trust dynamics	The teacher openly grappled with external perceptions and their own confidence, while valuing trust and psychological safety within the interpreter team.
Performing	Collaborative language exploration	Classifier use, language play, student creativity	The interpreter supported spontaneous activities involving classifiers and expressive choice, allowing students to experiment and engage in ASL storytelling.
Norming	Direct communication and instructional equity	Respecting lanes, multimodal access, real-time decisions	The teacher preferred direct communication for instructional integrity, yet appreciated interpreter backup when necessary, highlighting mutual understanding of roles.

Summary

Day 2's journal demonstrated the nonlinear nature and progression through Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. We moved from Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming, storming, and norming, while also experiencing performance synergy. I walked away from this lesson with the realization that the lesson was not marked by perfection, but by reflection, trust, and courage. Every decision, moment of tension, and shared success highlighted each dynamic interaction where classroom culture supporting language, access, and relationships thrive.

Day 3: March 6, 2025

March 6, 2025 stood out to me as a great day, reminding me of my passion for teaching. I considered this day a milestone in our collaborative journey. Interpreter 1 and I began the 3rd-hour class with a clear mutual vision: adhere to the routines we've been developing. I reviewed our agenda with her, including planners, class responsibilities, vocabulary review, two new vocabulary words, station work, mannequin modeling, and a video. She nodded in agreement, indicating that our planning has become intuitive and fluid. Time was precious, and we silently acknowledged that.

But before even diving into instruction, Interpreter 1 suggested a small but significant seating adjustment: moving one of our ASL students with significant language deprivation behind another student to allow for clearer one-on-one access. That moment marked a quick solution born from understanding student needs and resulted in an immediate difference. Engagement soared. This act highlighted Interpreter 1's alignment with our instructional goals and her awareness of our students' language profiles.

I was especially struck by one moment of student advocacy. A student who primarily uses LSL noticed the interpreter was not near for a student who needed access, and actively requested interpreting access. The student even signed “interpreter.” This was a powerful indicator of increased theory of mind and inclusive awareness. It was also the first time another student voluntarily connected their DM to the interpreter. These breakthroughs are not just teaching wins, they are living proof that collaboration may actually be teaching students thoughtfulness within the classroom.

During vocabulary review, Interpreter 1 beautifully reinforced boundaries. When a student put their head down instead of engaging with the expected 5-minute flashcard activity, the interpreter looked at me and said, “I’m not going to sign. I’m not doing this.” I appreciated that. It was not the interpreter’s role to redirect in those moments, and I affirmed her decision. This situation reflected our mutual understanding of respect, but even more than that. If the student chose not to utilize interpreting services for access, it was an opportunity to experience natural consequences in a safe environment with a returned instructional opportunity on choices and access.

Interpreter 2 also impressed me during our review. Interpreter 2 consistently waited until I was done signing, respecting turn-taking norms and my philosophy of direct communication and equity. She even encouraged a student with language deprivation during a challenging question by signing, “You can! You can!” It warmed my heart to see Interpreter 2 provide support without reducing expectations.

Later, while modeling the digestive system through a Canva presentation and mannequin, Interpreter 1 offered to trace diagrams on the smartboard to better support students in identifying each step without becoming overwhelmed with print and visuals. Without hesitation, I agreed.

This signaled another moment of anticipatory collaboration; we were moving into Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage.

One of the most touching moments of the day came when a student did not understand the English word numb. Despite attempts from both me and the interpreters to explain the concept, signs, and emphasize fingerspelling, another ASL-using peer stepped in to sign and explain the word. I was ready and started to provide a more in-depth expansion on this topic when Interpreter 1 looked at me and asked, "Do you mind if we let the student explain?" I smiled and said, "Let's try." I return to this moment in time frequently and reflected on if Interpreter 1 realized the power of that suggestion. We had the same values—respecting the deaf perspective in their native language, and also supporting the high-yield instructional strategy of peer tutoring. It was so natural, so effective, and unfolded in real-time because of Interpreter 1's suggestion and shared values.

I had a beautiful alignment with Interpreter 2, who has a medical background. I shared my science certification limitations and asked her to correct me if I ever misspoke as I reviewed the digestive system. Interpreter 2's silent nod said it all. Later, as we were breaking down the function of the pancreas, Interpreter 1 politely pointed out that I should circle the word "or" in the definition because it changed the meaning. Interpreter 1 was absolutely right, and I appreciated the collaboration, not allowing pride in my role interfere with accurate information and access for students.

The day wrapped up on a positive note. We even had 5 extra minutes after wrapping up the entire lesson, bell to bell. There was no wasted time, no confusion—just a wonderful sense of mutual trust, clarity, and genuine learning. This day really captured the essence of the performing stage of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development.

Our routines felt natural, communication flowed effortlessly, and we could see our students actively learning, advocating for themselves, and making tremendous progress not only in content but in social and personal awareness. The journal for this day may be found in Appendix F.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Connections

Journal 3's themes were developed by codes generated by interpreter initiative, student interactions, and our team's decision making and its contribution to a highly effective and responsive learning environment. The first theme or proactive role collaboration was developed from codes initiative, seating strategy, and boundary setting. These codes emerged when Interpreter 1 suggested repositioning a student for improved access to language through one-on-one interpreting. I had not yet considered this movement. Later, Interpreter 1 set a professional boundary by choosing not to interpret for a disengaged student who stopped watching instruction to lay his head down during flashcard review. I agreed with her decision, understanding that it aligned with the expectations we had reinforced together. These actions reflected the natural occurrence and blending of the forming and norming stages in Tuckman's (1965) model. While our roles were still being negotiated in real time, our collaboration demonstrated trust, shared expectations, and an emerging rhythm of professional alignment.

Student advocacy and peer awareness was constructed from the codes equity modeling, peer interaction, and DM use. These became especially apparent when a student who typically uses LSL noticed that a peer was without interpreter support and initiated access on their behalf by signing "interpreter" to request interpreting services. That same student voluntarily connected the DM to ensure all had access, even though they had resisted using the DM all year. These

moments signaled a shift in classroom culture. Students were beginning to internalize and prioritize the classroom culture of respect and inclusion. According to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming stage, these actions represent an established group identity where students were adopting our team's norms and reinforcing the values we modeled within the class.

The third theme of instructional responsiveness and feedback became apparent from the codes clarification, scaffolding, and visual support. One example was when Interpreter 2 encouraged a student during a challenging vocabulary moment by signing, "You can! You can!" These provided positive reinforcement to a student whose confidence was not yet developed. Later during instruction using Canva to illustrate photos, Interpreter 1 offered to trace diagrams on the ClearTouch board without prompting, responding to student communication breakdown. These were not isolated actions. They were anticipatory, responsive to student needs, and respectful of the instructional flow. These moments of initiative and seamless support illustrated Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage, where team members operate with high efficiency towards shared common goals.

The fourth theme of team anticipation and turn-taking reflected our evolving dynamic as a professional team. Codes contributing to this theme included rhythmic teamwork, anticipatory roles, and turn-taking. I noticed the interpreter paused when I signed, careful not to overlap with my communication modality of choice. This turn-taking reflected shared norms we did not need to open and explicitly discuss. It communicated respect and modeled how adults take turns and communicate in a shared space. This kind of behavior is indicative of the performing stage; a strong interpersonal understanding of a mature team.

The fifth theme, peer tutoring and language growth, originated from the codes peer scaffolding, encouragement, and language modeling. During a lesson on the word “numb,” both interpreters and I attempted multiple ways to explain the concept. Interpreter 1 paused, advocating for the opportunity for another peer whose first language is ASL to explain the concept to their peer. It was a subtle gesture with a powerful impact. I agreed and the success of that moment not only stuck with me, but demonstrated both students’ growth and our team’s mutual respect for Deaf cultural practices like peer instruction in ASL. This moment illustrates the blending of norming and performing in Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) model as it was both culturally affirming and a sign that the team trusted each other in incidental feedback opportunities to promote independence in our students.

The final theme of content accuracy and professional humility was developed by codes expertise acknowledgement and collaborative accuracy. Interpreter 2 has a background in the medical field, and I invited her to correct any inaccuracies as I taught the digestive system. She nonverbally affirmed this and later identified the conjunction “or” as I was teaching the function of the pancreas. This little conjunction held big meaning, as was crucial in understanding the dual dynamics of the pancreas and its role to the digestive system. It was a quick and subtle comment that ensured accurate instruction, and I quickly incorporated the correction. This theme aligns with Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming stage, as it reflects a working environment grounded in humility, shared responsibility, and the emotional safety of shared feedback with fear of repercussions.

Journal 3 demonstrated performing moments, but the evolution of trust, peer advocacy, and professional respect was deeply rooted and evidenced in the classroom. Table 6 outlines the codes, themes, and relationship to Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stage(s).

Table 6

Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 6, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965;

Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Forming/norming	Proactive role collaboration	Initiative, seating strategy, boundary setting	Interpreter 1 suggested classroom seating changes to better support language access and demonstrated strong role clarity around student support boundaries.
Norming	Student advocacy and peer awareness	Equity modeling, peer interaction, DM use	Students demonstrated increased understanding of access needs and appropriate interpreter requests, promoting shared responsibility for inclusion.
Performing	Instructional responsiveness and feedback	Clarification, scaffolding, visual support	Interpreters provided timely support through visual scaffolds and content feedback, reinforcing student understanding without disrupting instructional flow.
Performing	Team anticipation and turn-taking	Rhythmic teamwork, anticipatory roles, turn-taking	Interpreters respected instructional turns, demonstrated anticipation of teacher actions, and engaged in seamless transitions during lessons.
Norming/performing	Peer tutoring and language growth	Peer scaffolding, encouragement, language modeling	Student-to-student signing was encouraged and supported, showing progress in language development and collaborative instructional culture.
Norming	Content accuracy and professional humility	Expertise acknowledgment, collaborative accuracy	The teacher invited Interpreter 2's medical background to enhance accuracy, modeling humility and cross-disciplinary respect in the classroom.

Summary

Journal 3 captured a clear progression through Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, moving from moments of forming and norming into high functioning performing. The day began with shared routines, fluid instructions planning and communication, revealing our team's growing alignment and role clarity. Interpreter 1's proactive seating suggestion and professional boundary-setting reflected mutual trust and understanding consistent with forming/norming. Students mirrored inclusion and access, with one LSL student requesting interpreting access for a peer and voluntarily connecting to the DM, evidence of the norming stage. Throughout the lesson, both interpreters demonstrated instructional responsiveness, offering support and clarification, visual scaffolds, and positive reinforcement without disrupting instructional flow, a clear sign of performing. Our team's turn-taking, respectful communication, and advocacy for Deaf peer support exemplified norming and performing. Additionally, Interpreter 2's subtle corrections reflected a normed environment where professional humility and feedback were welcomed and naturally integrated without hesitation. Journal 3 illustrates that our team had not only reached the performing stage, but had done so through a foundation of shared values, trust, and student-centered collaboration.

Day 4: March 10, 2025

March 10, 2025, marked the conclusion of our 2nd week of research and prompted me to reflect not only on the progress of the students but also on our collaborative efforts. The class progressed quietly yet with purpose. One student who communicated using ASL was present while another was absent, and one student who primarily used simultaneous communication (SIMCOM), a communication modality where the student voices and signs words in English word order, attended. Before the class commenced, I held a brief meeting with both Interpreter 1

and Interpreter 2 to review the day's agenda. We continued our unit on the digestive system, concentrating specifically on the large and small intestines. Additionally, I introduced upcoming activities planned for after spring break, including a competition where students create a model digestive system featuring a marble to illustrate its pathway.

What stood out on this day were the subtle shifts. Although the interpreters had previously indicated they preferred one interpreter to sit directly in front of a particular student, they did not do that on this day. I suspected that the change in student attendance led to this adjustment, but I found myself hesitant to ask. I was not afraid of the answer; I just was not sure why I suddenly felt nervous. Perhaps it was the weight of our evolving dynamics and the vulnerability of leading a team and also studying it, or maybe it stemmed from prior workplace conflict. I was still feeling the effects of negative interactions on my decision-making, even after so much progress.

I made another powerful observation on this day. It struck me that I offered less explicit instruction on procedures and placement. I reflected if this was due to my increased trust in our team, or if we had we reached a point where expectations are understood intuitively. The students arrived, following their daily routines, and completed their tasks without additional prompts. One significant moment occurred when an ASL student approached the calendar and independently requested Interpreter 1 for assistance. This same student then handed the DM microphone to Interpreter 1. This was huge. The students recognized that although they were diagnosed as 'deaf', their access needs varied, and that it was important to advocate for others with access needs too.

I remained at the standing desk during the calendar activity, watching how things unfolded without interfering. The interpreter facilitated language during student-led jobs,

carefully awaiting any prompts or directions. At one point, the student did not know the word “counseling” that was written under the day’s plan, and instead of immediately signing it, Interpreter 1 paused, anticipating my intervention for an incidental language learning opportunity. I stepped in and encouraged student-to-student collaboration before intervening, an example of empowering peer learning, as Interpreter 1 warmly reminded me from Day 3. Ultimately, Interpreter 1 gave the sign when students could no longer assist each other, and it felt right to intervene. It was a moment of fluid, responsive teamwork.

Later within the lesson, a small incident occurred: the ASL student handed Interpreter 1 the DM and asked to pass it to me. I gently redirected, saying, “The student can give me the DM. That’s their responsibility.” Interpreter 1 responded positively, and I appreciated that she was receptive and did not take offense. I’ve heard many interpreters object, stating, “I’m still a human.” It was true, I did not see them as just a tool, and I wanted students to continue to work on their skills for independence. I felt like the interpreters truly understood my heart, and I have even heard them repeat a phrase I have often stated, “Please hear my heart, not my words.” It reinforced our mutual commitment to fostering student independence.

As the lesson progressed, I noticed the interpreters seemed somewhat reluctant. I realized that the unexpected student absences likely impacted our roles. This experience prompted me to reflect on the need to set aside time at the beginning of class for collaborative role clarification, especially when routines change. It is a practice I plan to implement in the future.

During our flashcard practice, I offered students the option to work either independently or with an interpreter. One student chose Interpreter 1. I could not determine if this was a choice based on preference or habit, but it provided valuable insight. Interpreter 1 positioned herself

close to the student but gradually moved away, an intentional act that helped to empower the student in their advocacy skills and independence.

We then continued the class with vocabulary review, followed by instruction on new words. I implemented a strategy previously suggested by Interpreter 1, which involved highlighting each digestive system organ on the ClearTouch board using a pen overlay. This approach proved to be very effective. The students understood better what to draw on their own notecards, and it helped reduce the confusion from earlier lessons. The thought dawned on me how little experience and feedback from interpreters made such large positive changes in the classroom, and reminded me that pride is not a priority when it came to teaming, and certainly not when supporting students. We already graduated; our students have not.

A particularly significant moment occurred when I gave an ASL student a worksheet to complete independently, without interpreter support. I informed the team that this task was not graded; instead, it aimed to collect data on the effectiveness of our ASL and English instruction. Although the student seemed anxious and paused before starting, they ultimately completed the worksheet and achieved a perfect score of 100%. The joy I felt in that moment was indescribable. Not for myself, but for the student's confidence growth and willingness to try without high risks. This accomplishment signified not only a success for the student but for all of us. I believe Interpreter 2 also had a realization that our students may be capable of much more than we often recognize. The journal for this day may be found in Appendix G.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Role clarity and anticipation emerged as a theme that spanned forming and norming. At the start of class, we held a short meeting to review the agenda, we held a short meeting to

review the agenda, but what stood out the most was how the interpreters adjusted their roles based on small changes within the classroom. For instance, though the interpreters typically sat in front of a specific student, they altered this arrangement without consulting me. This was likely due to student absences. While I hesitated to ask why, the hesitation itself revealed my sensitivity to previous perceived failed collaboration attempts with another interpreter, while also highlighting the growing sensitivity to our team's evolving dynamics. I still carried vulnerability; however, anticipating student and teacher needs, such as pausing before signing unfamiliar words like "counseling," demonstrated the deepening understanding of our budding classroom rhythm. These moments illustrated how codes role awareness, anticipatory support, and feedback response shaped our evolving norms.

The second theme of promoting student autonomy through our shared commitment aligned with the norming stage. Students took initiative to request interpreting services, utilize the DM, and choosing partners during the flashcard review activity. One student independently handed Interpreter 1 the DM, while another asked for help at the calendar. These small behaviors reflected empowerment, student initiative, and independent choice. I noticed how Interpreter 1 gently moved further away during the flashcard activity to give the student more space to advocate provide opportunities for independence. These actions reinforced our collective goal of building academic success and self-determination.

Another theme of collaborative scaffolding became emergent and aligned with the performing stage. When students were confused about drawing the digestive system organs, I implemented a strategy Interpreter 1 and previously suggested; using the ClearTouch board to trace the digestive organs for enhanced clarity. It was highly effective and illustrated instructional collaboration, scaffolding, and modeling in real time. Later, I observed how

Interpreter 1 paused during a student's job, waiting for my cue. When I encouraged a peer to step in to support, it became even more evidence that we were becoming fluid and responsive with a shared purpose.

The theme of trust and nonverbal teamwork aligning with norming and performing also emerged, highlighting how much of our communication became nonverbal, subtle, and anticipated. These small moments indicated that implicit communication and mutual trust had begun to replace former and formally required directives. Our classroom had developed a rhythm, like a dance, where everyone knew their role and supported where needed. I noticed this especially during calendar routines, when I could stand back and trust the process to unfold so that I could ensure student participation while gathering materials and taking attendance.

Not everything flowed so seamlessly, however. The them role ambiguity and reflective practice linked to the storming stage surfaced when I noticed interpreter hesitancy. With some students absent, there seemed to be slight confusion or reluctance about positioning and support. This reminded me that even well-functioning teams are not immune to disruptions and problem-solving. My reflection that we should dedicate more time at the start of class to recalibrate roles was initiated from hesitation, ambiguity, and the need for reflective adjustment. It was not failure, but an opportunity to refine our responses to storming catalysts.

The final theme of interpreter insight and role reevaluation was clearly evident and made a strong connection to the performing stage. When I assigned an independent assignment for a student whose primarily language is ASL, with not interpreter support, I communicated that this first independent attempt was for related IEP goal data collection. The student hesitated but ultimately completed the assignment with 100% accuracy. The pride I felt was intense, and not solely based on the student's academic achievement, but in their risk-taking and growth mindset.

I sensed that Interpreter 2 had that realization, too. Our students may be more capable than we sometimes assume. This represented capability recognition, a willingness to engage in educational risk-taking, and a growth mindset shared across roles. These realizations reinforced our shared belief that success requires flexibility and humility. We, the adult team, had graduated. Our students had not yet. Table 7 outlines the codes, themes, and relationship to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stage(s). The journal for this day may be found in Appendix H.

Table 7

Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 10, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Forming / norming	Role clarity and anticipation	Role awareness, anticipatory support, feedback response	Interpreters adjusted their involvement based on student needs and teacher expectations, often without explicit instruction, signaling growing anticipation of classroom flow.
Norming	Promoting student autonomy	Empowerment, student initiative, independent choice	Students independently requested interpreting, used DMs, and selected who to practice with, showing growth in ownership and classroom navigation.
Performing	Collaborative scaffolding	Instructional collaboration, scaffolding, modeling	Teacher and interpreters co-created learning opportunities through modeling vocabulary, visual cues, and real-time clarification.
Norming / performing	Trust and nonverbal teamwork	Implicit communication, mutual trust, classroom rhythm	Subtle handoffs and role-sharing reflected implicit trust. Interpreter actions complemented instruction without overt direction, contributing to lesson flow.
Storming	Role ambiguity and reflective practice	Hesitation, ambiguity, reflective adjustment	Interpreter hesitancy during student absences highlighted the need for clearer direction in non-standard settings.

Performing	Interpreter insight and role reevaluation	Capability recognition, educational risk-taking, growth mindset	Reflection suggested proactive strategies for future clarity. Interpreter reflection on a student's success with independent English work suggested a reevaluation of when to scaffold, illustrating the power of instructional risk-taking.
------------	---	---	--

Summary

Our team navigated multiple stages of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development in a single class period. This reflected the fluid and dynamic nature of our collaboration. We began in forming and norming, as a brief pre-class meeting on role clarification, navigated subtle shifts such as interpreting positioning, experienced unspoken adjustments and hesitation, hinting that we experienced the storming stage. However, trust and anticipation were evident as interpreters responded intuitively to classroom needs, indicating our transition to the norming and performing stages. Students practiced independence by requesting interpreter support and participating in daily routines without prompts. This allowed interpreters to engage in collaborative scaffolding and ensured space for peer learning, exemplifying the performing stage. The biggest example of the performing stage was evidenced when a student independently completed an assignment without interpreter assistance, sparking reflection and growth among the team members. This day highlights our progression through Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, which were not always linear, but responsive and cyclical to student dynamics and needs, and team reflections.

Day 5: March 12, 2025

Day 5 was quite hectic. I had an IEP meeting scheduled, but I forgot to enter it into the substitute request system. As a result, there was no substitute teacher and no coverage arranged. Additionally, our class had a long-anticipated pizza party during the 5th hour, where our students would be using the video phone independently, an activity important for developing both language and functional life skills.

This class marked the last 3rd-hour science class before spring break, and I felt the stress weighing heavily on me. The timing was not ideal for introducing new content and vocabulary. I did not want to introduce new vocabulary content, risking regression during the break. Instead, I held a brief meeting with both interpreters before class and suggested we change our approach. We would switch classrooms and focus on money skills, reading a menu, and preparing for the upcoming pizza ordering activity. It would have been simpler for me to follow our usual routine, but I needed this time to work one-on-one with a student, as they would be leading components of their IEP. I wanted to involve the interpreters in the decision-making process, and I needed them. It was not a normal class period, and I needed their flexibility more than usual. They both responded with amazing flexibility with a *just tell us where you need us.* I felt so safe, my doubts and guilt were relieved, and I felt a strong focus. The students feel it, too.

We moved to a colleague's classroom with printed mock menus. I had the students rotate through a station. Interpreter 1 stopped me before we began to revisit a prior conversation about signing clarity. The students often sign lazily, slouching in their chairs, omitting crucial facial expressions for clear communication, and signing with little effort. Interpreter 1 asked if she could sign badly during the activity to gauge whether the students would notice and provide

feedback. I loved the idea. The best learning opportunities are lived, and students are great at regurgitating rules and procedures, but experiencing life lessons is unmatched.

Interpreter 1 intentionally started interpreting poorly as I gave directions for the class, carefully scanning the room. No one reacted, and engagement was lacking. I directly asked a student, “Do you understand what she’s saying?” The student nodded affirmatively, but their eyes conveyed a different story. Scanning the room with a speculative gaze, I sensed that the students were aware of the interpreter’s shortcomings. Interpreter 1 then questioned, “Did you really understand me?” One student hesitated, while another confessed, “Yeah, I noticed [the lazy interpreting], but I didn’t want to be disrespectful.” That moment stuck with me. We dedicate so much time teaching our students about their rights and fostering advocacy, yet here was proof that social norms and the fear of upsetting adults still outweighed that instruction. It is crucial for us to explicitly model and practice what self-advocacy means in these complex situations. The student’s response was not a failure; it was insightful feedback. We still had work ahead of us.

There was no time to debrief with the interpreters afterward. Between supporting paras, prepping materials, coordinating the IEP, and managing the pizza party logistics (including ordering and teaching students how to use the video phone), I was utterly overwhelmed. Still, the interpreters did not miss a beat. The interpreters were proactive, squatting beside students, reinforcing math concepts, and never needing micromanagement. It was seamless. In a moment that struck me, Interpreter 2 turned to me gently and asked, “Hey, are you okay?” I did not even realize how visibly stressed I had become. That check-in meant the world. I felt seen. I felt supported. I was always the one to check in with others, but I also needed someone to check in on me.

Near the end of the hour, I sat with one student to review IEP goals. I asked her where she wanted the interpreter to sit. She pointed to the far side of the room. I realized that likely stemmed from a misunderstanding due to language deprivation. I asked Interpreter 2 to sit closer, explaining she needed to see the content. She agreed immediately and reassured the student. Then we slipped into the instructional dance, I would sign, and the interpreter would lower her hands. When I paused, the interpreter's hands came up. No cues. Just rhythm. It reminded me of a workshop I previously led: The power of the instructional dance. That is exactly what it was on this day. Even amid the chaos, I witnessed teamwork built on trust, rhythm, and mutual respect. That dance helped carry me through a really hard day. The journal for this day may be found in Appendix I.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group

Development Connections

March 12, 2025, began in the storming stage. Class started with an oversight before an IEP meeting where I had forgotten to submit for coverage, so we did not have a sub, and had a tightly packed schedule that included a critical pizza party where students would independently use the video phone. The internal overload was immediate and intense. The codes of overload, grace, and empathy became quickly evident, and I felt panic take hold. This moment made me feel like a failure in leadership, but it also revealed how far we had progressed as a team. Despite my disorganized and frantic start, the interpreters responded with calmness. They did not panic. Their exact words, "Just tell us where you need us," reflected our team's growing norming capacity and laid the groundwork for the day's transition into performing. Although I experienced educator overwhelm, I was met with mutual grace and felt emotional safety because of the interpreters' response.

As we pivoted from our planned lesson to a new activity about money skills and reading menus, the interpreters adjusted immediately. This was performing. I watched the adaptive support in real time. The shift required role adaptability, flexibility, and seamless communication, all codes that defined our teamwork on this day. It would've been easier to stick to the familiar, but I desperately needed the flexibility to work one-on-one with a student before they would lead their IEP meeting. Their willingness and flexibility were appreciated and critical. What struck me most was how fluidly we enacted these changes without friction or resistance. I felt supported and part of a team. Their willingness demonstrated our strength in collaboration.

During the new lesson setup, the norming process was reinforced when Interpreter 1 led a requested advocacy incidental lesson where she demonstrated poor interpretation; she was slouched, expressionless, and unclear to see if students would advocate for clarity. Her suggestion reflected deep insight into both the students' needs and our shared instructional goals. This interaction embodied the theme of student empowerment and advocacy, and within it were the codes of advocacy and student respect. The students' response was telling. When confronted, one confessed, "Yeah, I noticed [the lazy interpreting], but I didn't want to be disrespectful." This moment highlighted that while we teach self-advocacy often, social inhibition and power dynamics still influence how students apply those lessons. It was not a failure, it was data. We were in norming, testing expectations, uncovering student beliefs, and reinforcing our values through real-time experience.

As the day progressed, performing emerged even more clearly. I did not need to micromanage. The interpreters moved instinctively, reinforcing math concepts, supporting students, and anticipating needs without prompt. I was pulled in so many directions. I was

prepping materials, supporting and planning para coverage, and coordinating the pizza party, but they supported me through it all. This was instructional rhythm, a theme marked by instructional dance and nonverbal communication. At one point, Interpreter 2 simply asked, “Hey, are you okay?” That check-in was not just kind, it was evidence of deep trust and emotional safety. This was a second theme that blended both norming and performing. I felt seen. I felt cared for. And I knew they had my back.

Later, when I worked with one student to review IEP goals, the student directed the interpreter to sit across the room. This was likely due to a misunderstanding due to language deprivation. I corrected the positioning and asked Interpreter 2 to move closer. She immediately agreed, calmly reassuring the student. Then I began teaching. Without formal conversations, we fell into rhythm: I signed, she paused; I voiced, she began. This was performing distilled. The theme of instructional rhythm emerged again. The codes of instructional dance and communication were no longer abstract. There were no cues. Just instinct. Just trust.

This day wove in and out of storming, norming, and performing, further reminding me just how fluid these stages can appear and reappear. When I was overwhelmed, the interpreters extended grace. When we pivoted instruction, they adapted. When the lesson exposed deeper truths about advocacy, we leaned into them. And when I needed help, they responded without hesitation. In the end, the trust, rhythm, and mutual respect we’d built got us through one of the most demanding days of the year. Our teamwork did not just carry the class; it carried me. Table 8 outlines the codes, themes, and relationship to Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stage(s).

Table 8

Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 12, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Performing	Adaptive support	Flexibility, role adaptability, communication	Interpreters adjusted fluidly to unexpected plans and instructional pivots, enabling the class to run smoothly even in high-pressure circumstances.
Norming/performing	Psychological safety and trust	Trust, emotional safety, grace and empathy	I felt emotionally secure even while overwhelmed. Interpreters' interpersonal care and professionalism sustained a collaborative foundation.
Norming	Student empowerment and advocacy	Advocacy, student respect	The lesson revealed both the strengths and limitations of student self-advocacy, especially around adult authority and social norms.
Performing	Instructional rhythm	Instructional dance, communication	Our fluid, nonverbal rhythm exemplified well-established collaboration—like a dance, each partner knew when to lead and when to follow.
Storming/norming	Educator overwhelm and mutual grace	Overload, grace and empathy	Despite my internal chaos, the team offered grace, allowing me to remain grounded. This mutual support buffered the impacts of emotional labor.

Summary

Our team cycled through multiple stages of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, beginning in storming as I faced emotional overload and logistical

failure without sub coverage or a clear plan. We quickly transitioned into norming as I involved the interpreters in decision-making, relied on their emotional support, and collaboratively adjusted the day's lesson. As the day unfolded, strong examples of performing emerged as the interpreters adapted roles fluidly, supported students, and engaged in an instructional rhythm with me, demonstrating deep trust, communication, and mutual respect. Though the day was hectic, it reflected our ability to navigate stages nonlinearly, responding to real-time needs with flexibility, care, and cohesion.

Day 6: March 26, 2025

Day 6's journal centered on a rather unusual school day. I returned from an absence on Monday, where I had made a conscious decision not to check in while I was out. That might sound small, but it was intentional and powerful. Teachers, especially special education teachers, often feel the compulsion to work even when they are off the clock. But I had been learning to reclaim my time, to rest when I am supposed to be resting because burnout is real.

When I returned, we had a very small class with only two students present. One was a signing student with significant language deprivation, and the other student hovers between spoken language and SIMCOM. Given the small group and the altered schedule due to an upcoming half-day, I decided to lean into flexibility. I adapted the day's lesson plans to focus on job application practice and vocabulary scaffolding, with a hint of social-emotional learning woven through our conversations.

Before the lesson began, I asked both interpreters if they were comfortable taking on a more active role by giving feedback during the interview roleplays. Without hesitation, both interpreters agreed. Their eagerness to participate reminded me that effective interpreting goes

beyond mere language facilitation; it encompasses nurturing students' cognitive and social-emotional development so they can utilize interpreters more independently in the future.

We split into two groups. Interpreter 1 and I worked with one student in the classroom to review the components of their job application, while Interpreter 2 helped a student and another adult in the hallway. I noticed that Interpreter 2 was not merely interpreting passively; she intervened when support staff struggled to provide effective assistance. In a particularly memorable moment, Interpreter 2 was asked to roleplay both a responsible and an irresponsible student. Interpreter 2 enthusiastically replied, "Yeah, let's do this!" but soon found it difficult to interpret for the staff while also performing in the skit. I regret not intervening promptly; I realize now that I could have taken on the roleplay myself, allowing her to focus entirely on interpreting.

Meanwhile, Interpreter 1 raised concerns about the student's comprehension of the application process. Interpreter 1 was correct, the student did not understand it. As a result, we went through the language together. That moment of care and support, recognizing what I had overlooked, was exactly what drives effective teamwork.

Later, we shifted to a discussion about preparing for high school. One student asked me if high school would be difficult. I responded candidly, explaining the importance of having a growth mindset and how high school demands maturity and effort. I included Interpreter 1 in the conversation, comparing our personalities, saying, "She's quiet and reflective; I'm loud and silly. Who's right?" The student looked confused, then said, "Neither?" I smiled, saying, "Exactly. We're both right. Just different." That moment was casual, but so important as it illustrated the importance of diversity in adults modeling healthy, respectful differences.

To close the class, students worked on a cardboard digestive system project. The student with language deprivation gestured for Interpreter 1 to come over. That advocacy cue, a simple beckoning motion, made Interpreter 1 smile. It was not about a perfect sentence or signed grammar. It was about the student recognizing that they could ask for help. That moment conveyed everything; the student was learning. The journal for this day may be found in Appendix J.

Coding, Theme, and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Connections

March 26, 2025, marked a deeply reflective moment in our evolving collaboration. Although our class was small, the dynamics were not. Returning from an absence, I made a the decision to not communicate about work while out. That intentional act was small but signaled my desire for work-life boundaries, an often-overlooked aspect of self-sustaining professionalism.

Upon returning, I quickly observed a theme of collaborative role flexibility, aligning with both forming and norming stages. Before class, I invited both interpreters to provide feedback during roleplay activities. Their immediate agreement and enthusiasm revealed growing mutual trust and shared investment in student development. This invitation and response also demonstrated role adaptability and the beginning of instructional support shifts, especially when the interpreters moved fluidly between interpreting, modeling, and direct support roles, each navigating blurred boundaries without undermining their primary responsibilities.

We experienced the storming/norming stages when Interpreter 2 agreed to perform a skit but soon became overwhelmed, juggling interpretation with performance. This reflected role tension and a need for clearer delegation. I recognized my mistake in hindsight. I should have

taken on the roleplay so she could focus on interpreting. This moment underscored the reality that teamwork is not always seamless and is often shaped by immediate needs, decision fatigue, and spontaneous adjustments.

Meanwhile, Interpreter 1 voiced concern about a student's misunderstanding of the job application process, illustrating the theme of scaffolding and shared responsibility, fitting with the norming stage. Together, we broke down the language to ensure student comprehension. It was a subtle but critical moment of team scaffolding, where our combined perspectives helped close a gap I had not seen on my own.

As class continued, we entered the performing stage, particularly through moments of student empowerment and advocacy. One student, who previously struggled with expressive communication, simply gestured for Interpreter 1's help. Students were self-advocating, and the interpreter and I felt mutual pride.

I addressed a student's fears about high school and used it as an opportunity to model a growth mindset. I involved Interpreter 1 in the conversation by using our contrasting personalities as an example. The student's insight: "Neither [of you is right]" was a beautiful, unscripted moment where a student synthesized emotional understanding with real-world application. This exchange reflected professional modeling and reinforced how our team relationships indirectly shape students' worldviews.

Ultimately, this journal entry exemplified that our team was moving in and out of multiple stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing fluidly and often simultaneously. The success of the day did not lie in flawless execution but in our willingness to adapt, communicate, and place student needs above rigid role definitions. It reminded me that even in a classroom of two, collaboration is not diminished. If anything, its complexity is magnified, and

so is its impact. Table 9 outlines the codes, themes, and relationship to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stage(s).

Table 9

Themes Derived From Open Coding of March 26, 2025 Journal Entry Using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman stage	Theme	Codes included	Summary
Forming/norming	Collaborative role flexibility	Role adaptability, clarification, flexibility	Interpreters shifted roles between clarification, modeling, and instructional support, especially when student language needs and adult staffing required joint problem-solving.
Performing	Student empowerment and advocacy	Advocacy, encouragement, student voice	Students practiced advocating for interpreter assistance and differentiating between personality types in authority figures, reinforcing self-awareness and expressive independence.
Norming	Scaffolding and shared responsibility	Instructional support, team scaffolding, staff mentorship	Interpreters and staff worked together to scaffold vocabulary and job application comprehension, highlighting the shared responsibility of language modeling.
Performing	Professional modeling and growth mindset	Growth mindset, professionalism, real-world prep	Discussions with students about high school, personality differences, and effort versus ability offered real-time modeling of emotional maturity and metacognition.
Storming/norming	Navigating limited resources	Overload, role tension, decision fatigue	With limited students and adult support, roles occasionally blurred. This required adaptive decision-making and gentle negotiation of interpreter boundaries.

Journal Synthesis

This section consolidates my personal journal reflections into a single table, aimed at exploring how my experiences as a signing hearing TOD relate to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. After thorough analysis of each journal entry, I structured a table based on themes, connections to the stages of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, and journal dates to evaluate the progression of these stages across all entries.

Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Through Personal Journals

In my role as the signing hearing TOD for this study, I thoughtfully documented and reflected on the 5 weeks of collaboration with two ASL interpreters. During this period, I closely monitored how our collaboration techniques developed, progressing through each of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. Our partnership stemmed from daily exchanges, moments of uncertainty, and a shared commitment to facilitating student access and success. I utilized Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development as an interpretive lens for my personal journal reflections. Through open coding, I identified themes in each journal entry and aligned them with the relevant stages of team development. This strategy allowed me to reflect on classroom happenings and the evolution of our team over time. Below is an analysis of each stage as recorded in my journals, supported by thematic patterns.

Forming

On March 03, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage. I identified a theme of interpreter

autonomy and role ownership, which I coded using terms like seating choice, start-up autonomy, and service expectations. The interpreters determined their own seating and turn-taking roles at the beginning of class, reflecting mutual respect and early team autonomy.

Forming/Norming Stage

On March 04, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming and norming stages. I identified a theme of role fluidity and adaptive support, which I coded using terms like flexible roles, para-like support, and team initiative. Interpreter 2 shifted fluidly between interpreting and instructional support, stepping in when gaps appeared and responding to student needs in real time.

On March 06, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming and norming stages. I identified a theme of proactive role collaboration, which I coded using terms like initiative, seating strategy, and boundary setting. Interpreter 1 suggested classroom seating changes to better support language access and demonstrated strong role clarity around student support boundaries.

On March 10, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming and norming stages. I identified a theme of role clarity and anticipation, which I coded using terms like role awareness, anticipatory support, and feedback response. Interpreters adjusted their involvement based on student needs and teacher expectations, often without explicit instruction, signaling growing anticipation of classroom flow.

Storming Stage

On March 12, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) storming stage. I identified a theme of instructional

clarity and role confusion, which I coded using terms like uncoordinated signing, voice voiding, and delayed transitions. Timing mismatches between teacher signing and interpreter voicing created confusion, highlighting areas for clearer role negotiation.

Storming/Norming Stage

On March 26, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) storming and norming stages. I identified a theme of navigating limited resources, which I coded using terms like overload, role tension, and decision fatigue. Roles occasionally blurred with limited students and adult support. This required adaptive decision-making and gentle negotiation of interpreter boundaries.

Performing Stage

On March 04, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of the Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. I identified a theme of instructional coordination and anticipation, which I coded using terms like clarification, visual anchoring, and instructional flow. Interpreter actions aligned with instructional pacing, demonstrating shared awareness of class goals and smooth coordination.

On March 06, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. I identified a theme of team anticipation and turn-taking, which I coded using terms like rhythmic teamwork, anticipatory roles, and turn-taking. Interpreters respected instructional turns, demonstrated anticipation of teacher actions, and engaged in seamless transitions during lessons.

On March 10, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. I identified a theme of interpreter insight and role reevaluation, which I coded using terms like capability recognition,

educational risk-taking, and growth mindset. Interpreter reflection on a student's success with independent English work suggested a reevaluation of when to scaffold, illustrating the power of instructional risk-taking.

On March 12, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. I identified a theme of instructional rhythm, which I coded using terms like instructional dance and communication. Our fluid nonverbal rhythm exemplified well-established collaboration, like a dance, and each partner knew when to lead and when to follow.

On March 26, 2025, I reflected on a moment I would later categorize as part of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. I identified a theme of student empowerment and advocacy, which I coded using terms like advocacy, encouragement, and student voice. Students practiced advocating for interpreter assistance and differentiating between personality types in authority figures, reinforcing self-awareness and expressive independence. These themes are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Journal Synthesis Table

Journal date	Tuckman's (1965) stage	Theme
March 03, 2025	Norming	Reflective planning and anticipatory support
March 03, 2025	Forming	Interpreter autonomy and role ownership
March 03, 2025	Norming	Student-initiated interpreter use
March 03, 2025	Norming/performing	Access equity and instructional scaffolding
March 03, 2025	Performing	Collaborative vocabulary instruction
March 03, 2025	Storming	Instructional clarity and role confusion
March 04, 2025	Norming	Direct communication and instructional equity
March 04, 2025	Performing	Collaborative language exploration
March 04, 2025	Storming/norming	Professional vulnerability and reflective practice
March 04, 2025	Norming	Student empowerment and respectful feedback
March 04, 2025	Forming/norming	Role fluidity and adaptive support
March 04, 2025	Performing	Instructional coordination and anticipation
March 06, 2025	Norming	Student advocacy and peer awareness
March 06, 2025	Norming	Content accuracy and professional humility
March 06, 2025	Norming/performing	Peer tutoring and language growth
March 06, 2025	Performing	Team anticipation and turn-taking
March 06, 2025	Performing	Instructional responsiveness and feedback
March 06, 2025	Forming/norming	Proactive role collaboration
March 10, 2025	Storming	Role ambiguity and reflective practice
March 10, 2025	Norming/performing	Trust and nonverbal teamwork
March 10, 2025	Performing	Collaborative scaffolding
March 10, 2025	Norming	Promoting student autonomy
March 10, 2025	Forming/norming	Role clarity and anticipation
March 10, 2025	Performing	Interpreter insight and role reevaluation
March 12, 2025	Storming/norming	Educator overwhelm and mutual grace
March 12, 2025	Performing	Instructional rhythm
March 12, 2025	Norming	Student empowerment and advocacy
March 12, 2025	Norming/performing	Psychological safety and trust
March 12, 2025	Performing	Adaptive support
March 26, 2025	Storming/norming	Navigating limited resources
March 26, 2025	Performing	Professional modeling and growth mindset
March 26, 2025	Norming	Scaffolding and shared responsibility
March 26, 2025	Performing	Student empowerment and advocacy
March 26, 2025	Forming/norming	Collaborative role flexibility

Interpreter Interviews

This section consists of a detailed analysis of the interpreter interviews, which followed a similar process to the personal journals in their alignment with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. Interpreter interviews employed a similar approach to data analysis as the personal journals. The process of sifting through personal journal data for codes and themes mirrored its complexity in relation to Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. After each week of instruction during the study, I interviewed both interpreters, recording each session for verbatim transcription. I engaged deeply with the interpreters' words as a reflector, participant, and teammate. Each transcription was carefully reviewed, highlighting phrases that resonated with me, responses of uncertainty and connection, as well as 'Aha!' moments.

Like with the personal journals, I started with open coding. As patterns began to surface across interviews, I organized open codes into thematic categories and aligned them with the five stages of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development. Each interview is labeled by the interview date and chronological order. A subsequent table includes open codes, themes, research questions, and examples. Each table is supported by a narrative that further elaborates on the code details, themes, and their connections to the research questions.

While carefully combing over each interview and using the research questions and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development as my framework, I was struck by the complexity, rawness, and depth of what we, as the TOD and interpreters, have built with each other. Each interview enriched our shared story as I dedicated time to research each question, finding moments of solitude and reflection along the way. As the teacher, I am

often doing the talking, directing, and delegating, but these interviews forced me to pause, actively listen, and reflect upon my practices as a signing TOD within the scope of my modified DHH science classroom. Through this process, I was not just analyzing team dynamics but living through each stage of teamwork and witnessing our growth, struggles, and rawness unfold in front of me. I was a witness to my own growth, professionally and personally, observing how my training as a TOD from a comprehensive preparation program, my communication philosophy, and my instructional values and priorities shaped an environment of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

From the framework of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, interviews were clearly mapped across all stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and touched lightly into adjourning. Through our interview process, we created adjourning together. As an autoethnographic researcher, my methodology was deeply reflective and inherently participatory. Rather than observing data as an outsider and viewing it as finite, I played dual roles as the researcher and participant. When I first started reflecting and reviewing interpreter interview transcripts, I was taken aback by the sheer amount of information. Writing a narrative from that amount of data was a significant feat and required a more careful methodological approach to analyze through an autoethnographic lens using Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) framework.

I started by highlighting responses that struck a nerve. I did not immediately analyze these emotions, but simply marked any emotionally charged responses or moments that sparked reflection. It was surprising to find that nearly every response was highlighted. This made clear that I could not simply collect data; I had to engage with it deliberately. I reread each interview in isolation, creating a copy to add margin comments detailing my first impressions. These

comments represented immediate reflections, affirmations, and questions I posed to myself as I reencountered the experiences described and perceived. I then reread each comment, writing a narrative summary through my perspective as the TOD, interweaving direct quotes with my immediate emotions, reflections, insights, memories, and potential discussion topics.

I linked quotes to each research question and began forming codes based on recurring themes across interviews. This step helped me make sense of the data and write a rich, detailed narrative from my dual lens as researcher and participant. I then compared each interview against the others. This process provided valuable insight into the dynamics of team development and cohesion, interpreter role evolution, and the impact of shared values. Throughout this process, I prioritized authenticity over polished academic reporting, a challenging but necessary choice in a highly contentious and deeply human field. The purpose of this research was never to arrive at a single answer, but to tell the story of our team dynamics, their nuances, and how they fostered both instructional and professional growth.

These step-by-step procedures empowered me to center my own voice as the signing TOD from a comprehensive program while amplifying the voices of my interpreter colleagues. In doing so, I honored the lived experiences within a DHH classroom, acknowledging the tensions, triumphs, and transformative process that defined our collaboration.

Interpreter Interview Results

As a TOD in an aural oral city, I often feel the immense pressure to be perfect, to prove to other educational DHH team members and sway the oralists that we can be so much more than the singular narrative that plagues us—oral is best, interpreters stay in your lane, I (the oralist) and the expert. That mindset, I recognize, is not accurate, supportive, or even reasonable. Throughout this study, I had to remind myself of my methods, purpose, and lens as the autoethnographic

researcher. As both the TOD and researcher, I positioned myself inside the lived experiences that shaped this collaborative experience: the good, the bad, and navigating the unknown.

Each interview highlighted the nuances of interpersonality and emotional richness, laughter, tears, moments of deep vulnerability, and even deeper self-awareness and understanding. The interviews revealed the complexity of our shared roles in a self-contained DHH-modified science middle school classroom. As I skimmed, dove, and faced each response, I detailed my reactions to not only capture content of what was said but how it resonated within me, my pedagogical philosophy, and my emotional experience. These reflections became more than rigid data to answer research questions; they became a shared journey that we awkwardly and excitedly found in solace in an empty meeting room, lowering the curtain, and awkwardly sitting down with nervous expressions, not knowing at all what to expect. Even as the researcher, I could not anticipate the depth of each transcript, and its offered emotional truths through interpreter dialogue.

Interview 1: March 7, 2025

Through Interview 1, Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage was gently introduced. Interpreter 1 said, "We just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us." I agreed, teamwork and collaboration did not just occur overnight; it was a process. I have learned throughout the years of teaching that planning for everything is not only a huge feat, but impossible. I could not believe that I was implementing my research with interpreters that I had not worked with in previous years. It was a risk. Not only working with a new interpreter, but to have two ASL interpreters in one of my classrooms, a group of new students, while simultaneously implementing research, was overwhelming.

Mentally and emotionally, I just could not handle another workplace trauma on our team. I did not have the energy, which is why this research was such a big risk. There was no safety net, and I was masking the inevitable terror of the unknown. The DHH room already felt so congested at times, adding a second interpreter felt like more adults in the room to assess my skills, to judge me as the hearing signing TOD. I knew in my heart that it was needed for student access, so I pressed on with a big smile, convincing myself that this was the right move.

As we started this study, I recognized that our roles were not neat and tidy like those outside the DHH department may expect. That is like a stranger asking what the job of a teacher is, they would likely say they teach. But the reality is that it is so much more, rich, and complex, and when working with students with high language needs, varying communication modalities, IEP goals, background schema, and behaviors, the list of roles and responsibilities becomes so much longer.

In my previous experience with many interpreters, I have had a range of interpreters, from those who overhelp to those who move their hands and rarely engage with other staff or students. You never know who your partner will be, but we had to figure it out, and quickly.

Interpreter 1's said during our first interview, "We just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us." I mused and nodded my head in agreement. This does not happen overnight. It is a process with few formal rules and procedures to follow. This was hard for me.

Our start was awkward and delicate, and we lived and stumbled through our genesis in the classroom. We were forming, yes, but we were also struggling, hesitant, and undoubtedly walking on eggshells. Interpreter 2 added, "We're figuring out our roles, but doing it in front of the students, being transparent with them." That struck me so hard. We, as adults with an

acquired full language, forget that children, and especially children with language deprivation, see us as the models for language, behavior, problem-solving, and socialization. Learning is best retained when meaningful and lived, at least through my experience.

I felt exposed. I did not want to pretend that we had all the answers because the truth is, we did not. And that is part of adulting. When Interpreter 2 added, “I think that we kind of spent the beginning chunk of the year trying to be really clear about what our roles were,” I hung on to that word, roles, and thought back to the role ambiguity, distress, and ultimate burn-out literature (C. Humphrey, 2015). How was this role ambiguity affecting the interpreters within my class? Did we even know our roles as we were walking in?

Although I have not heard colleagues mention Davino’s pyramid in some time, I often catch myself from rolling my eyes when this discussion arises. The truth is, so rarely do our Deaf students fit into a clean, organized, and linear box that follows Davino’s pyramid of interpreter usage, and if the TOD does not have a background in ASL, deaf culture, and working with students with significant language deprivation, I do not see the application in our building. For my students, for our students, I thought more about the environment and meeting the diverse needs of our students. We do not have to force the students to fit a theory, philosophy, or rule of thumb; we could mold the environment and scaffolding to meet their needs, until students could reach more independence. Our Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage during this time was not a one and done, it was our own plan do study act (PDSA) cycle. It was our plan and strategy, and we would do anything to support these students.

This interview served as a reflection of how our team came together, highlighting the influence of my TOD training and the effects of workplace traumas on my engagement as a team

member. A summary of the themes, codes, and examples aligned with Tuckman's (1965) stages appears in Table 11. The transcript from this interview appears in Appendix J.

Table 11

Interview 1: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes	Summary of examples
Forming/norming	Student support through seating	Role clarity, student engagement, environmental adjustment	Interpreter suggested a classroom seating change to support student language access and engagement. This demonstrated proactive thinking and respect for student needs.
Norming	Team communication and trust	Collaboration, nonverbal cueing, trust	Team members described organic development of classroom roles and expectations, underpinned by strong communication and mutual trust.
Storming/norming	Negotiating roles through transparency	Role ambiguity, transparent role formation, real-time adjustment	The team worked through unclear role expectations by being openly communicative in front of students, modeling transparent collaboration.
Performing	Coordinated responsiveness and anticipation	Anticipation, visual cues, real-time coordination	Interpreters responded to the teacher's shifts seamlessly, relying on nonverbal cues and experience to know when to step in without interrupting instruction.

Interview 2: March 13, 2025

By Interview 2, the tone had shifted. I felt more comfort from the interpreters as they seemed to speak more authentically and bravely. As I read off each question, ensuring I left wait time, more responses started to paint a narrative through each of Tuckman's (1965) stages. Interpreter 2 stated, "I appreciate knowing what to expect in class now." I agreed. There does not always need to be a formal meeting with an agenda. There does not always need to be a formal email with every step laid neatly in order. We could work smarter, not harder.

Interpreter 1 shared, "We're not just interpreters; we're part of how students' access, engage, and succeed." I reread this answer three times. They get it. I am no interpreter. I have never attended an interpreter preparation program, but I have seen a lot of educational interpreters with varying degrees of philosophies and models. But they get it. Their role for these students was so much more than relaying information.

Interpreter 2 said, "We don't always get this kind of prep and communication." I thought to myself, how often have I read the word communication? This felt like the most repeated accolade. Don't we all desire clear communication? As teachers, we teach our students how to interpret rubrics, we teach them the criteria for success, we label learning objectives—but how does this translate into working relationships? Few things in the working field are as frustrating as trying to interpret your supervisor's expectations through vague and nuanced emails and general statements. I think every employee desires to know exactly what their job entails, and that's probably why there is such a high turnover rate in our field—it is not neat or easily defined. Clear communication seemed to define and introduce mutual understanding and clarity. Our work had moved into the next stage of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages: norming.

We were functioning with grace, not friction. Interpreter 1 noted, “Because of our rapport, we were able to throw in last-minute learning opportunities.” I excitedly commented, “Crucial!” Was my program background or experience the reason I was more adaptable to role ambiguity and real-world applications as a result of my training?

This second interview was not dramatic or filled with emotion like some of the others; it felt grounded. We had lived in the same classroom for months by then, and the routine was becoming second nature. That, in itself, was a powerful marker of progress. In the beginning, I had been watching closely, trying to make everything just right. But I began to notice that the interpreters were shifting alongside me, not because of my explicit requests or guidance, but because they were adapting.

Interpreter 1 noted, “For Monday . . . there was just a little bit of hesitation . . . but we figured it out . . . without having to pull you aside.” That stood out. In those first few weeks, I constantly worried about micromanaging or undercommunicating. But here they were, telling me that they could adjust in real-time. We were syncing.

I began to let go of that obsessive fear of failing. I had been afraid that any moment of miscommunication would reflect poorly on me as a hearing signing TOD, but now I was starting to trust them and myself. These were no longer strangers interpreting for my students; these were team members.

When Interpreter 2 reflected, “We kind of spent the beginning chunk of the year trying to be really clear . . . but also being transparent with the students,” it reminded me of how conscious we had been to let students see the figuring-out process. It was not clean, but it was real. And students benefited from watching us model healthy respectful team dynamics.

Even the small logistical moments started to feel less stressful. Interpreter 1 said, “That short conversation before class . . . this is what we’re going to do,” and I remembered how those 5-minute chats changed our entire flow. We did not need big sit-down meetings. We were becoming efficient, and there was trust in that brevity.

I could also see that my training in deaf education mattered. Without a program that emphasized deaf culture, language access, and team-based strategies, I do not think I would have known how to pivot my instruction as gracefully. Interpreter 2 had noticed that, too, saying, “You had to change a little bit of how you were teaching based on the dynamic of the interpreters.”

That comment validated something I often fear gets overlooked in interpreter–teacher collaboration. Instruction is not static. It is fluid. It is alive. When interpreters change, the flow of the classroom changes. But instead of resisting it, I had started leaning in.

This second interview marked a new phase in our journey where awkwardness was transforming into adaptability, and the unknown was increasingly understood. We were starting to establish norms, not through a formal checklist, but by collectively experiencing and addressing students’ needs. Although we had not completely arrived, we were now walking side by side, and that held significant importance. A summary of the themes, codes, and examples aligned with Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages appears in Table 12. The transcript from this interview appears in Appendix K.

Table 12

Interview 2: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes	Summary of examples
Forming	Spontaneous role assignment	Last-minute prep, flexibility, real-time coordination	Before class, interpreters engaged in a quick conversation to divide responsibilities and adjust to new plans spontaneously.
Norming	Shared understanding and trust	Rapport, classroom rhythm, interpersonal ease	The team expressed how mutual rapport enabled them to take advantage of teaching moments and adjust to instructional needs seamlessly.
Performing	Instructional flow and anticipation	Seamless handoff, mutual awareness, adaptive shifts	Teachers and interpreters adjusted their teaching based on interpreter dynamics, allowing lessons to flow smoothly.
Storming/norming	Internal interpreter decision-making	Unspoken negotiation, peer communication, role balancing	Interpreters worked out their responsibilities nonverbally or through brief peer discussion, keeping the teacher from needing to intervene.

Interview 3: March 27, 2025

Interview 3 focused on recent developments that highlighted a move toward student independence and classroom unity. As we gathered in our usual meeting space, with Interpreter 1, Interpreter 2, and myself, the atmosphere was filled with a sense of achievement and calm

reflection. In contrast to previous interviews characterized by anxiety or cautious replies, this interview resembled a dialogue among partners who had collaborated much longer than they truly had.

Interpreter 2 shared, “The student had come and asked me to interpret their exam.” This moment struck me. It might seem minor to someone outside our classroom, but to us, it signaled the student’s emerging ability to self-advocate. This was not just a reflection of the student’s growth, but also of the environment we had cultivated, one where asking for support was encouraged, and independence was a goal, not a given.

Interpreter 1 added, “It was a safe place to make mistakes.” That quote stayed with me. Our DHH students do not often get that kind of space. The margin for error is rarely extended to them. We mad mistakes in front of our students, but we do so with honesty and reflection, showing that failure is not final, it’s a crucial part of the process.

The interpreters did more than translate spoken words into ASL; they actively engaged with the emotional and instructional dynamics of the classroom. When Interpreter 2 stated, “Being on standby really looked like . . . watching body language,” I felt a sense of validation. This highlighted that interpreting requires presence. Their role remained active, even in silence. I have frequently observed interpreters becoming disengaged when they are not actively signing. However, in this setting, I noticed a deeper commitment to student success.

We discussed how our work was impacting other professionals in the building. Interpreter 1 said, “If another adult had any doubt in their mind that there was a breakdown, she would reach out to us.” I reflected on that, asking myself: were our practices influencing other team members; and had our transparency, our shared norms, become a model. I hoped so. These were not just routines. They were rituals of trust.

Reflecting on this interview, I thought deeply about grit, not just the students' grit, but ours, too. Interpreter 2 said, "There might be some tough moments . . . but that's really important . . . this is life." I wrote beside that comment: creates students with grit. It was more than academic growth we were supporting. We were helping students develop resilience.

We also embedded moments of reflection for our students. Interpreter 2 recalled, "We had time to reflect with students about the interview process." That never would have happened in the classrooms I observed during my undergrad program. Interpreters are often viewed as tools for language access, not as instructional supports. But here, we were creating space for feedback. It made me proud of how far we had come.

This interview marked a definite shift into Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. Our team was no longer merely guessing or improvising; we were aligning, flowing, and trusting one another. As for the students, they were developing their skills in advocacy, communication, and reflection. This was the truest indicator of our collaboration. We started living out true collaboration, and both we and the students were thriving. A summary of the themes, codes, and examples aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages appears in Table 13. The transcript from this interview appears in Appendix L.

Table 13

Interview 3: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes	Summary of examples
Storming	Disrupted routine and emotional fatigue	Schedule disruption, emotional strain, routine dependency	Interpreters expressed the emotional weight of a disrupted schedule and personal fatigue. They felt disconnected and less enthusiastic, affecting their classroom presence.
Storming/norming	Blended support roles in crisis	Flexibility, boundary blurring, student needs	Due to staffing and routine changes, interpreters adjusted by stepping into each other's roles or helping more than usual to meet student needs effectively.
Norming	Peer understanding and perspective taking	Empathy, peer collaboration, emotional insight	Interpreters recognized emotional cues in each other and offered help, practicing collaborative care without undermining peer autonomy.
Performing	Advocacy and shared classroom presence	Advocacy, engagement, unified front	Interpreters emphasized how well they operated as a unit, adapting fluidly to support students without overcommunicating logistics.

Interview 4: April 3, 2025

Interview 4 marked a profound emotional shift. Unlike the earlier interviews, which focused on structure or uncertainty, this one felt like closure. Interpreter 1 and Interpreter 2

seemed more reflective, grounded, and invested. They were not just answering questions; they were sharing nuanced insights drawn from their lived experiences and perceptions.

Interpreter 1 remarked, “What you’re trying . . . collaborating with interpreters is pretty cool . . . I hope once this research is published . . . others will learn from it.” I felt a wave of validation. They saw the need for this research. I remember pausing the recording for a moment, stunned. I have always felt that collaboration between TODs and interpreters was undervalued or oversimplified. Now it was being named, appreciated, and uplifted.

Reflecting on Interpreter 1’s comment, “Because of the things that each of us contribute,” I noted that our collaboration had evolved into genuine teamwork. This was not a TOD-dominated environment. It was shared, dynamic, and mutual. I would like to think that was partly because I constantly checked myself and asked if I was giving space and if I was making room for feedback, adjustment, and shared ownership.

One of the most touching moments came when Interpreter 2 said, tearfully, “Your willingness to help us be prepared . . . gives me confidence in that class.” My heart clenched and I wondered if this was their first time being treated as part of a team. It made me wonder how much emotional labor they had carried in other classrooms.

Our conversations returned to the students. Interpreter 1 mentioned, “Our students are still learning what using an interpreter looks like for them.” That hit me. Yes. These moments of stepping in, of holding back, teaching them to advocate, were not just about interpreting. They were part of the curriculum. We were actively teaching students how to navigate access and autonomy.

When Interpreter 2 described students realizing that interpreters match tone and attitude: “Okay, if your body language is showing me you’re not interested,” I smiled. It was an aha

moment for both students and adults. My margin note read: they may not realize that interpreters match tone and ‘attitude.’ It was small moments like these that remain in the back of my mind.

The discussion also highlighted how trust, rapport, and preparedness built a foundation. Interpreter 1 said, “Because of our rapport . . . we were able to throw in last-minute learning opportunities.” I scribbled in the margin: CRUCIAL! Due to my program? Background? My training did not promise perfection, but it helped me to navigate ambiguity.

Interpreter 2 reflected, “We had time to reflect with students about the interview process.” That opened my eyes. This study was not just for me. It was for the students. We embedded modeling, feedback, and reflection into the very fabric of our days.

As I transcribed and reviewed this interview, I noticed that Tuckman’s (1965) adjourning stage did not feel like a goodbye. It felt like growth. A new norm had taken hold. Our collaboration did not have a clear endpoint because it was evolving, stretching beyond the scope of this research.

Interview 4 revealed the fullness of our teamwork. It was not neat. It was not perfect. But it was real, intentional, emotional, and human. Through shared effort, emotional investment, and reflection, we built something worth continuing, even as the research phase came to a close. A summary of the themes, codes, and examples aligned with Tuckman’s (1965) stages appears in Table 14. The transcript from this interview appears in Appendix M.

Table 14

Interview 4: Themes, Codes, and Examples of Interpreter Collaboration Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes	Summary of examples
Forming	Role responsiveness and shared initiative	Flexible role shifting, proactive support, shared understanding	Interpreters adjusted to unexpected changes, such as covering for each other or supporting students one-on-one without direct assignment. This included interview prep and stepping back when students worked independently, showing fluid, team-based decisions.
Storming	Adaptability in shifting contexts	Absence management, change in plans, communication adjustment	Interpreters navigated absences, field trips, and surprise assignments (like being pulled from class), reflecting the team's commitment to maintaining support despite interruptions.
Norming	Communication transparency and foundation of trust	Clear expectations, collaborative norms, comfort with uncertainty	Interpreters appreciated shared expectations and transparent rationale for teaching decisions, such as pre-explaining why interpreting would be delayed until after independent testing.

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Codes	Summary of examples
Performing	Effective team synergy supporting learning	Task delegation, interview collaboration, individualized support	Collaborative execution of interview practice, testing setup, and flexible student grouping, all while supporting IEP goals and maximizing engagement.
Adjourning	Reflection on team growth and future application	Emotional closure, mutual respect, team impact reflection	Team members shared reflections on personal growth, mutual respect, and hopes for the research to influence broader practices in deaf education settings.

Interpreter Interview Synthesis

After analyzing each interview, I organized the interpreter's perspectives and lived experiences according to Tuckman's (1965) stages. Each section explores the interpreters' views on the development of team identity, supported by relevant questions and the interview source. This structure allows readers to trace the progression of teamwork through the interpreters' viewpoints, while also navigating our professional roles within shared spaces.

Throughout all four interviews, my role as both the TOD and researcher provided me with a uniquely personal and emotional perspective on our evolving team collaboration. These conversations with Interpreter 1 and Interpreter 2 transcended mere data; they opened windows into real-life working relationships in deaf education that warrant further study. Each interview unfolded like chapters in our collective story, navigating the phases of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and even adjourning.

Interview 1 revealed Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage in its purest state. We were filled with uncertainty, vulnerability, and an underlying tension to achieve success. As Interpreter 1 stated, "We just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us." This statement validated much of my emotional effort, the unseen planning, the anxieties, and the forced smiles I wore for reassurance. I mentioned, "This doesn't happen overnight," and indeed it did not. The foundation we established was not rooted in a training module; it was built on trust, testing, and timely feedback.

Interview 2 introduced more friction. Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) storming stage emerged in subtle but significant ways. We felt more comfortable speaking freely, and the weight of expectations became visible. Interpreter 2 noted, "We don't always get this kind of prep and communication." That was the first time I realized our routines were not typical. I reflected yet again on Interpreter 1's quote from our last interview: "Because of our rapport, we were able to throw in last-minute learning opportunities." That only happens when we push through discomfort and learn how to truly trust each other. That process was sometimes emotional, sometimes awkward, and how we experienced the storm.

By Interview 3, we began Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage. Interpreter 2 reflected, "The student had come and asked me to interpret their exam." That autonomy..that trust...was the product of us modeling shared leadership. We saw each other. As Interpreter 1 explained, "It was a safe place to make mistakes." I felt pride. We had created that safe space, not only for the students, but for ourselves as professionals. There was also increased fluency between us. We did not need to define roles; we were living them. I noted, "Too often interpreters are distracted or disengaged; this team stays ready."

Interview 4 brought a moment of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) adjourning stage. It was an emotional close for me. Instruction was not done, the year was not done, but the reflection we provided felt so deep and powerful. Interpreter 2 said, "Hope that once this research is published . . . others will learn from it." That was not a compliment to me. That was a call to the field. My margin note read: They see the need for this research! And they did. Even the vulnerability, the tears, the lived reflection, they were all part of what we built. Tuckman said these stages are not linear, and neither were we.

Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development Through Interpreter Interviews

Through Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, I thoroughly analyzed the evolution of teamwork during this study, utilizing hybrid coding. Insights from interpreter interviews highlighted the dynamics within the classroom and their role navigation while prioritizing student access and professional boundaries. This section outlines our team's progression through the stages of Tuckman's forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

Forming

Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) forming stage appeared as the team navigated role clarity and adjusted to classroom dynamics. This stage is characterized by initial interactions where roles are undefined, and the group is still figuring out how to collaborate effectively. During this phase, the team takes tentative steps toward defining roles, adjusting to one another's working styles, and adapting to the classroom environment.

In Interview 2, the interpreters demonstrated spontaneous role assignment, quickly dividing responsibilities and adjusting to new plans as they emerged before the class began. This

reflects the team's early efforts to define roles and respond to the classroom's needs in real-time. The spontaneity of their adjustments highlights the uncertainty and flexibility characteristic of the forming stage.

In Interview 4, the interpreters showcased role responsiveness and shared initiative, adjusting their roles as needed and supporting each other without explicit direction. This ability to adapt to new circumstances without waiting for clear guidance reflects the early, fluid nature of teamwork in the forming stage. The interpreters displayed flexibility in responding to the dynamic classroom environment, ensuring that they were always ready to support one another.

Additionally, Interview 1 provided an example of the forming stage through student support via seating adjustments. One interpreter suggested a change in seating arrangements to improve student engagement and language access. This proactive move demonstrated the team's growing awareness of how their roles could evolve to better meet student needs, a key characteristic of the forming stage, where team members start experimenting with their roles in response to the classroom environment.

Together, these examples illustrate how the team navigated initial role ambiguities and demonstrated flexibility and proactive collaboration. By adjusting to each other's working styles and responding to classroom dynamics, the interpreters began to establish a foundation for effective teamwork. This process aligns with the characteristics of Tuckman's forming stage, where team members are still figuring out how to collaborate while adapting to one another's strengths and the classroom environment.

Storming

The storming stage is characterized by conflict, tension, and challenges as team members push against boundaries, navigate role ambiguity, and experience emotional strain (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). This phase often brings disruptions, frustrations, and differing approaches to tasks, which can lead to interpersonal conflicts. However, it is also a crucial stage for growth, as teams learn to resolve these issues.

In the interviews, the storming stage is clearly illustrated by the emotional fatigue and disruptions the interpreters faced. Interview 1 highlights the team's early efforts to negotiate roles through transparency. The interpreters communicated openly with each other, setting a clear example for students, which helped address the unclear expectations of their roles. By doing so, they began refining their roles and responsibilities, which is a hallmark of the storming stage. Their open communication laid a foundation for more effective collaboration in the face of ambiguity.

In Interview 2, the interpreters showed internal decision-making by handling their responsibilities with minimal teacher involvement. They used nonverbal cues and brief discussions to coordinate their roles, which allowed them to manage tasks smoothly without external guidance. This approach is characteristic of the storming stage, where team members refine their roles and adapt to one another's needs to improve efficiency.

Interview 3 further highlights the emotional toll and disruptions that impacted the team's effectiveness. The interpreters described how changes in their routines, combined with emotional fatigue, led to feelings of disconnection and reduced enthusiasm. This emotional strain reflects

the challenges faced in the storming stage, as the team struggled to stay engaged while dealing with external disruptions and internal stress.

In Interview 4, the interpreters demonstrated their adaptability in shifting contexts, such as managing unexpected absences and last-minute tasks. Despite these disruptions, they were able to quickly adjust and continue supporting their students. This flexibility is a key feature of the storming stage, as the team learned to handle challenges and adapt their roles as needed.

Additionally, in Interview 3, the interpreters showed how they stepped into each other's roles during crises, covering additional responsibilities when necessary. This demonstrated the team's growing ability to collaborate under pressure, a sign that they were transitioning from the storming phase to a more cooperative approach, blending roles and responsibilities to ensure student needs were met.

These examples from the interviews illustrate how the storming stage tested the team with challenges such as emotional fatigue, role ambiguity, and external disruptions. Despite these difficulties, the team showed resilience by adjusting roles, communicating openly, and supporting one another. Their ability to navigate these struggles laid the groundwork for their growth into the norming stage, where roles became clearer and collaboration became more fluid.

Norming

Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) norming stage was rich with examples, most notably with instances of growing trust and rhythm throughout the interpreter interviews. The norming stage marks a critical point in team development where members begin to establish clear roles, develop stronger communication, and build mutual trust. During this stage, the team

works more cohesively, leveraging their understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses to improve collaboration.

Interview 1 illustrated the role of team communication and trust, where the interpreters described how their collaboration evolved from initial confusion into a more structured approach, built on mutual trust and open communication. This allowed them to adapt to classroom challenges more fluidly and with greater confidence in one another's contributions. The team shared that their roles and expectations gradually became clearer, thanks to improved communication and trust, which helped them better navigate the classroom environment.

In Interview 2, the interpreters emphasized shared understanding and trust, expressing how their growing rapport enabled them to adjust to teaching moments and instructional needs seamlessly. As their relationship deepened, the team became more comfortable working together, with each member able to anticipate the others' actions and adapt to changes in the classroom with ease.

Interview 3 highlighted the emergence of peer understanding and perspective-taking, with the interpreters recognizing each other's emotional cues and offering support without undermining one another's autonomy. They emphasized the importance of empathetic collaboration, noting that mutual understanding allowed them to work effectively together in the classroom.

Finally, in Interview 4, the interpreters discussed communication transparency and a foundation of trust, reflecting on how the clarity with which they communicated about their roles and expectations helped to reduce misunderstandings. They noted that explaining the rationale

behind decisions, even when changes or delays were necessary, contributed to stronger coordination and minimized confusion within the team.

These examples reflect how the norming stage is characterized by the development of clear roles, strengthened communication, and mutual trust. The team began to operate more harmoniously, with each member becoming more comfortable in their roles and contributing to the overall success of the classroom environment. Through ongoing communication, transparency, and a deepening understanding of each other's needs, the team was able to move past earlier conflicts and establish a strong foundation for continued collaboration.

Performing

In Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) performing stage, the collaboration within the team became highly dynamic and responsive. By this point, we no longer needed to pause instruction to coordinate; instead, we instinctively anticipated each other's actions, a hallmark of a high-functioning team. In Interview 1, the interpreters reflected on how they had reached a point where they could manage tasks seamlessly, adjusting to the classroom environment without needing to stop and clarify roles mid-lesson. This smooth coordination marked a shift from earlier stages, where role clarity was still evolving, to a point where the team was functioning fluidly and effectively.

A central focus of this stage was student empowerment. In Interview 2, the team reflected on the rewarding experience of seeing students independently ask for help without needing prompting. This shift indicated that students were beginning to see the team as an integral part of their learning process, marking their growing independence. The team's role evolved from

simply facilitating access to content to actively engaging students, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning.

In Interview 3, another interpreter shared the rewarding experience of witnessing students engage confidently and creatively with language, feeling safe to experiment. This behavior reflected the environment the team had worked to create, one where students felt supported and empowered to use language freely. This was not only a sign of the students' academic growth but also of the interpreters' successful integration into the learning process.

As the performing stage progressed, the interpreters became more attuned to their role in fostering student independence. In Interview 4, the team reflected on how their approach had shifted beyond facilitating access to content. They now focused on shaping students' ability to navigate learning independently, helping them build confidence and autonomy in their educational journey. This shift in the team's approach highlighted how the interpreters had become key partners in supporting student development, not just as communicators but as active enablers of students' growth.

These reflections from the interviews demonstrate how the team's collaboration during the performing stage became increasingly seamless, with roles becoming more defined and communication more intuitive. The focus shifted to empowering students, ensuring they had the tools and confidence to take ownership of their learning. The team's alignment with the values of inclusive, student-centered teaching was evident as they continued to foster a learning environment that encouraged independence, creativity, and confidence.

Adjourning

Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) adjourning stage was evident through the interpreters' reflections as we neared the end of the semester. The emotional closure of this stage was highlighted in Interview 4 as the interpreters acknowledged the shift in their roles and the collaborative bond that had developed. One interpreter noted that this had been a transformative experience, expressing how difficult it was to imagine leaving the class. They reflected that this experience had significantly changed their perspective on both teaching and interpreting, indicating the deep impact of the collaboration.

Another interpreter shared that their professional growth throughout the semester had gone beyond just the technical aspects of interpreting, with the experience feeling more like a personal investment than just a job. This sense of growth and the emotional investment in the work speaks to the closure and reflection that is characteristic of the adjourning stage.

As the interpreters reflected on their time working together, they emphasized how their collaboration and rapport had evolved beyond a functional partnership. It was noted that the experience had been unique, with the team having built a strong connection. This growing rapport was essential to the success of their work, as it facilitated smoother collaboration and mutual support, which became increasingly evident as the class came to a close.

These reflections underscore the emotional and professional shifts that occur in the adjourning stage, marked as a time of closure and recognition of the growth and bonds formed during the collaboration. The interpreters' acknowledgment of the trust and respect they had developed over time shows how the adjourning stage isn't just the end of a project but also a point of reflection on the changes and relationships that have evolved.

Table 15

Theme Alignment with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group

Development from Interpreter Interviews

Tuckman's stage	Theme	Interview source
Forming	Spontaneous role assignment	Interview 2
Forming	Role responsiveness and shared initiative	Interview 4
Forming/norming	Student support through seating	Interview 1
Storming	Disrupted routine and emotional fatigue	Interview 3
Storming	Adaptability in shifting contexts	Interview 4
Storming/norming	Blended support roles in crisis	Interview 3
Storming/norming	Internal interpreter decision-making	Interview 2
Storming/norming	Negotiating roles through transparency	Interview 1
Norming	Peer understanding and perspective-taking	Interview 3
Norming	Shared understanding and trust	Interview 2
Norming	Communication transparency and foundation of trust	Interview 4
Norming	Team communication and trust	Interview 1
Performing	Instructional flow and anticipation	Interview 2
Performing	Effective team synergy supporting learning	Interview 4
Performing	Advocacy and shared classroom presence	Interview 3
Performing	Coordinated responsiveness and anticipation	Interview 1
Adjourning	Reflection on team growth and future application	Interview 4

Summary

The interpreter interviews reflected a journey through every stage of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) teamwork theory, not as a linear path but as an evolving process. These stages did not unfold in a clear step-by-step manner; rather, they entered and exited fluidly and in and out of order throughout each day. At times, Tuckman's forming and norming overlapped within the same lesson, or instances of storming arose even during well-established performing actions. This complexity reflected the lived reality of our experience in a DHH classroom. Our collaboration was not static; it was responsive to student needs, adaptable enough to allow us to function as a highly effective team in our unique yet highly dynamic instructional environment.

Convergences And Divergences: Personal Journals and Interpreter Interviews

After analyzing my personal journals and interpreter interviews, I carefully reviewed both for how they converged and diverged. This analysis encouraged me to slow down and consider the broader context of our collaboration, exploring how our narratives supported or contradicted each other. Utilizing the open codes developed from personal journals and interpreter interviews, I created tables to display the overlapping convergences. Each pairing was purposefully aligned with the same lesson. For instance, if I coded a journal entry with themes like misaligned expectations, I sought out interviews that echoed that discomfort or offered a contrasting viewpoint.

To clarify these alignments or inconsistencies, I created a table that presents our respective codes, quotes, and associations with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages side by side (see Table 16). This facilitated my reflection on patterns that illustrated the dynamics of collaboration in our shared classroom. It required me to look beyond my own perspective and accommodate the views of my teammates. This analysis not only addressed my research questions but also shed light on the experiences of a deaf education team in the classroom.

Table 16

Convergences Between Interpreter Interviews and Teacher Journals Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Tuckman's stage	Interview sources	Journal sources	Summary of examples
Forming	Interpreter Interview 2, Interpreter Interview 4	Journal 03.03.2025	Both sources emphasized forming roles through flexible support strategies and adapting to student needs.
Forming/Norming	Interpreter Interview 1	Journal 03.04.2025, Journal 03.06.2025, Journal 03.10.2025, Journal 03.26.2025	Forming and norming converged around shared initiative, environmental adjustment, and responsive support during instruction, often without prompting.
Storming	Interpreter Interview 3, Interpreter Interview 4	Journal 03.03.2025, Journal 03.10.2025	Both sources described moments of emotional strain, shifting routines, and negotiation of expectations during unpredictable circumstances.
Storming/Norming	Interpreter Interview 1, Interpreter Interview 2, Interpreter Interview 3	Journal 03.04.2025, Journal 03.12.2025, Journal 03.26.2025	Emotional overwhelm and boundary negotiation were highlighted in both, showing the shared strain during storming/norming stages.
Norming	Interpreter Interview 1, Interpreter Interview 2, Interpreter Interview 3, Interpreter Interview 4	Journal 03.03.2025, Journal 03.04.2025, Journal 03.06.2025, Journal 03.10.2025, Journal 03.12.2025, Journal 03.26.2025	Themes of implicit trust, clear communication, and mutual understanding were reinforced by both teacher and interpreter narratives.
Performing	Interpreter Interview 1, Interpreter Interview 2, Interpreter Interview 3, Interpreter Interview 4	Journal 03.03.2025, Journal 03.04.2025, Journal 03.06.2025, Journal 03.10.2025, Journal 03.12.2025, Journal 03.26.2025	Real-time responsiveness and mutual anticipation during instruction reflected a high-functioning team dynamic across both views.

When I started this research, I did not expect to invest so much of myself into it. Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development provided a guiding framework, but the personal stories shared in interviews and reflected in my own journals brought that theory to life in complex, and often messy way. Each of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, was not a neat, linear chapter, but instead, full of fluid, overlapping, and at times, an uncomfortable journey marked by tension, negotiation, and recalibration. Our collaboration did not advance in a straight line, but through cycles of vulnerability, emotional labor, and repair. It was these challenges that the most meaningful growth occurred. It was in the conflicts, the unspoken moments, and the missteps that trust deepened, roles evolved, and our shared commitment to DHH students took on deeper significance.

Forming: Shared Initiative, Environmental Adjustment, and Responsive Support During Instruction

Convergence during the forming stage centered on shared initiative, environmental adjustment, and responsive support as roles were first established. Interpreter 1 reflected, "Because of our rapport and our collaboration, we were able to throw in a little bit of what felt like a silly aspect of the interview...and it happened smoothly and effectively only because we have the rapport and relationships we do." Her reflection captures the willingness to experiment together, signaling early trust and openness even while procedures were still developing. Interpreter 1 also acknowledged the need for adaptability and amid uncertainty: "I think from my perspective, your willingness to communicate and be flexible with what's happening just in our everyday life. Obviously, this is living proof that Deaf Ed is just a little chaotic sometimes, and we have to just kind of go with it." This comment aligns with my early journal entries describing

similar flexibility as essential to managing the environment and supporting students effectively. My March 3, 2025 journal noted, “Everything felt new today and we were all figuring it out as we went.” Both accounts highlight convergence in maintaining grace under uncertainty and adapting on the spot.

Early responsiveness also characterized these interactions. Interpreter 1 stated, “We just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us.” This mirrors my own recognition that routines were co-constructed rather than pre-assigned. We relied on quick adjustments and mutual observation to align our approaches.

Storming: Navigating Emotional Strain and Roles

Convergence during the storming stage was grounded in shared emotional strain and negotiation of expectations while the team adjusted to, at times, unpredictable instructional demands. Interpreter 2 explained the challenge of maintaining balance: “Sometimes it’s impossible for us to catch every single thing, but Interpreter 1 was looking at one of the students’ applications and had mentioned to me, “I’m not sure if the student understands what this says.” Her description demonstrates problem-solving amid uncertainty. My March 3, 2025 journal mirrors this sentiment of fatigue and effort to support all students and interpreters: “Award timing and fatigue as we adjusted mid-lesson.” These parallel reflections reveal convergence in recognizing the strain and exhaustion of multitasking through instruction and interpreting, while constantly assessing access for individual students and the need for continuous adjustment.

Divergence appeared in how the tension was internalized. My March 2, 2025 journal also captured my private anxiety, “masking the inevitable terror of the unknown”, whereas interpreter accounts presented the same pressure of adaptation and teamwork. Despite different emotional

perspectives, all participants engaged in mutual repair and boundary clarification, sharing strain that became the first bridge toward cohesion.

Storming/Norming: Boundary Negotiation and Mutual Grace

Storming/Norming convergence centered on emotional overwhelm, boundary negotiation, and shared strain that began transforming into trust. Interpreter 2 recalled the atmosphere of trust that emerged even in the presence of disorder. “I don’t feel pressured or stressed, and I just feel very welcome, and I want to go to class.” My March 12, 2025 journal revealed the same shift from tension to reassurance: “I just felt very overwhelmed and I guess having grace with me today and understanding that today’s lesson wasn’t a lesson, but more of an enrichment activity...made me feel like the see me.” Together, these statements show convergence in how empathy and support replaced early uncertainty.

Another point of convergence appeared in the recognition of adaptability as a shared norm. I wrote, “It just feels so comforting and safe to know that there are interpreters I work with who are just truly there for the kids and really adaptable.” This aligns with Interpreter 1’s comment, “I always feel like if I think there’s a suggestion on how to improve how we’re working together...that feedback is always welcome. Both describe an openness to feedback and flexibility.

Divergence remained in the experience of that shared labor. Interpreter 1’s confidence in dialogue contrasts with my continued fatigue, expressed in the same day’s journal: “I’m very tired, and I need all the reminders I can get.” While the interpreters framed collaboration through empowerment and feedback, I documented the emotional depletion from sustained responsibility. This contrast exemplifies the depiction of shared staring during this time. We were occupying different emotional spaces, yet maintaining connection through grace, humor,

and connection. This divergence illustrates that the same collaborative environment was viewed simultaneously as empowering and draining, depending on each member's emotional reserves. Yet both perspectives reveal commitment to communication and repair.

Norming: Embracing the Flow of the Work

The norming stage reflected convergence across interpreter interviews and teacher journals around implicit trust, clear communication, and mutual understanding. Communication had become fluid, and routines were predictable. Interpreter 1 described this established ease: “We know each other’s expectations that it’s really easy to do those nonverbal communication things...a lot smoother. Interpreter 2 emphasized the role of consistent structure: “Every day the students come in, they’re getting their notecards, they start their procedures, and they copy the agenda.” Her observations align with my journals from March 3-March 26, 2025, which detailed how these routines anchored both students and us as a team. The collaboration required less explicit direction; instead, shared habits guided the daily flow. My March 26, 2025, journal illustrated the same trust extending to students: “A student naturally went to the interpreter and said, ‘Hey, I need you to interpret for me.’” This moment captured how advocacy and support had become normalized, indicating that communication expectations were internalized across the classroom team.

Divergence at this stage appeared primarily in the degree of emotional energy each member devoted to maintaining smooth interactions. Interpreter 2 highlighted continued flexibility, “Anytime there’s going to be something out of the norm...you’re really great about telling me that ahead of time...just to give you a heads up.” Her words illustrate that she remained actively alert and dependent on proactive information sharing to anticipate and adapt to unpredictable moments. My March 26, 2025, journal captures a sense of relief as those same

exchanges became routine: “A student naturally went to the interpreter and said, ‘Hey, I need you to interpret for me.’” While the interpreter continued to invest effort in staying informed and ready for change, I experienced reassurance in the predictability of our established rhythm.

Performing: Role Clarity, Student Independence, and Coordinated Support Through Anticipatory Collaboration

Convergence during the performing stage reflected a team operating with role clarity, shared rhythm, and independent student participation. Interpreter 1 described the ease of collaboration that had developed: “We know each other’s expectations that it’s really easy to do those nonverbal communication things...a lot more smooth.” This reflection illustrates that communication required much less verbal mediation as coordination had become intuitive. Interpreter 2 confirmed the predictability of routines that supported both students and the team: “Every day the students come in, they’re getting their notecards, they start their procedures, and they copy the agenda.” My March 26, 2025, journal mirrored that observation from the instructional perspective: “A student naturally went to the interpreter and said, ‘Hey, I need you to interpret for me.’” These examples converge, showing that the students and adults alike are engaging in seamless, predictable routines.

Another point of convergence emerged around mutual anticipation. Interpreter 2 noted, “Anytime there’s going to be something out of the norm...you’re really great about telling me that ahead of time...just to give you a heads up.” This statement illustrates the proactive communication that maintained equilibrium even when routines shifted.

Divergence appeared in this stage not in the teamwork quality, but in focal orientation. Interpreters emphasized anticipatory logistics such as staying alert to potential shifts or changes, while my journals reflected on instructional focus and a sense of accomplishment. Their

vigilance maintained access, and my relief stemmed from watching students manage their awareness and advocacy around autonomy. This subtle divergence underscores the complementary nature of performing in that each participant contributed from a distinct vantage point, yet all worked toward the same outcome.

Divergences

Table 17

Divergences Between Interpreter Interviews and Teacher Journals Aligned with Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) Stages of Group Development

Week	Stage reported	Source
Week 2	Forming/norming	Journals 4 and 5 only
Week 2	Storming	Journals 4 and 5 only
Week 2	Forming	Interpreter Interview 2 only
Week 4	Adjourning	Interpreter Interview 4 only
Week 4	Forming	Interpreter Interview 4 only
Week 4	Norming	Interpreter Interview 4 only
Week 4	Performing	Interpreter Interview 4 only
Week 4	Storming	Interpreter Interview 4 only
Week 1	Forming	Journal 1, Journal 2, Journal 3 only
Week 1	Storming	Journal 1, Journal 2, Journal 3 only
Week 3	Forming/norming	Journal 6 only
Week 3	Storming	Interpreter Interview 3 only

Revisiting my journal and the interpreter interviews revealed not only our shared work but also the differences in how we relived experiences through reflection.

Forming: Confidence vs. Uncertainty in Role Definition

An early divergence emerged around role clarity. In the first interview, Interpreter 1 reflected, “We just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us.” This sounded collaborative, yet my first journal captured a very different internal reality for me. In the journal margins, I had written: “masking the inevitable terror of the unknown.” While Interpreter 1 viewed those spontaneous beginnings as teamwork and improvisation, I experienced them as

survival. Their words carried assurance; mine exposed exhaustion and fear of judgment. This contrast set the tone for how emotional security and professional confidence diverged from the outset.

Storming: Attribution of Challenge and Emotional Labor

This internal struggle often went unnoticed by the interpreters until it surfaced in subtle dynamics. This storming phase appeared understated in interpreter interviews. Interpreter 1 recalled “figuring out roles,” whereas my own experience was far more emotional. My early journal described the mental toll of decision-making after earlier professional trauma, where attempted collaboration felt unwanted and evaluatory rather than supportive. Our divergence reflected positionality: I was both the participant and researcher, responsible for the space and instruction, whereas the interpreters participated as engaged collaborators in a space I felt accountable for.

Norming: Vigilance vs. Relief in Predictability

By the norming stage, collaboration had become more fluid, yet our internal orientation diverged. Interpreter 2 highlighted continued alertness: “Anytime there’s going to be something out of the norm...you’re really great about telling me that ahead of time...just to give you a heads up.” Her vigilance reflected sustained professional awareness. My March 26, 2025 journal however, described reassurance that routines now unfolded independently: “A student naturally went to the interpreters and said, “Hey, I need you to interpret this for me.” For her, success prioritized preparedness; for me at this time, it meant release. We inhabited the same rhythm and space but from distinct emotional vantage points.

Performing: Focus on Logistics vs. Instructional Outcomes

During the performing stage, interpreters and I continued to view success through different lenses. Interpreter 2 recalled, “The student had come and asked me to interpret their exam.” For her, this represented a smooth, affirming instance of student independence and recognition of accessible needs. For me, it symbolized broader progress, in which a student with language deprivation was initiating access autonomously. Their perspective celebrated improvement in time, while my perspective contextualized it as a marker of long-term empowerment and advocacy.

Adjourning: Readiness vs. Reflection

The interpreters expressed closure and professional readiness. Interpreter 1 noted the unusual opportunity to slow down, saying, “A lot of time we’re there to facilitate communication, and then we’re done and we leave. And so to have that moment of we have some time to breathe for a second, if there’s anything that you feel like would be helpful for the student to know about the interview process between an interpreter and the person being interviewed, you’re welcome to share that.” Her words conveyed gratitude and reflection. Interpreter 2 echoed this sense, “And I think to add on to that, because this concept is so new for our students and there’s such a learning curve that goes with it, they’re learning from everything in that moment, in that situation. And I think for me, it was little things like since the student is still learning how to use the interpreter. And so it’s things like, okay, if your body language is showing me that you’re here, but you’re not really interested, that’s what my voice is going to sound like. So that’s the effect that I’m going to try to match. And so some of our students understand that, and some of our students don’t fully understand that yet. And so it gave an

opportunity to really explain that. And we don't always get that opportunity during class time.” Both interpreters framed this perspective through continued growth.

Emergent Constructs and Future Talking Points

While Tuckman's stages of group development provided a framework for organizing and interpreting how collaboration unfolded within the classroom, a deeper rereading of the data through a future-oriented lens revealed several patterns that cut across stages. These patterns illuminated how collaboration evolved across time, language, and emotion, revealing both the strength and fragility of interprofessional teamwork in DHH classrooms. Although each construct aligned with aspects of Tuckman's stages, they also expanded that model, emphasizing that growth is rarely linear and is often sustained through reflection, recalibration, and shared vulnerability. By naming these emergent constructs, this study offers a shared vocabulary for future TOD-interpreter teams and researchers, supporting more intentional navigation of similar partnerships. These constructs serve as a bridge to Chapter 5, which builds on them to interpret their broader significance within Deaf Education, teacher preparation, and interpreter collaboration, and to explore how these insights may inform theory, practice, and policy in the field.

Table 18*Emergent Constructs, Focus, Purpose, and Guiding Questions*

Construct	Focus	Purpose	Guiding questions
Role Clarification	Establishing shared expectations	Define professional responsibilities to prevent overall confusion	Where do our responsibilities naturally overlap, and how do we clarify them? What routines or communication cues help us stay in sync during lessons? How will we support students in understanding our professional roles? How do we ensure our roles stay distinct but complementary to avoid confusion for students?
Collaborative Recalibration	Navigating tension through adjustments	Recognize and address unspoken tensions, encourage adaptive decision-making through empathy	When we disagree or notice tension, what is our plan for addressing it respectfully? When one of us feels pulled in different directions, how can we make it easier to bring that concern forward? How will we give and receive feedback in ways that support trust rather than defensiveness? When we miscommunicate in front of students, how do we correct in a way that models respect?
Dynamic Role Coordination	Building implicit communication systems	Cultivate shared timing, language, flow, and mutual responsiveness	How will we share important information such as vocabulary, key content, or student feedback? How will we check in to ensure we are both aligned? What are our daily or weekly check-in routines? When one of us sees an accessibility gap, what is our process for stepping in? What do we need in order to feel confident and supported in the classroom?
Adaptive Collaboration	Demonstrate responsiveness to evolving classroom demands	To apply collective adaptability in real time to preserve student access and learning	How can we anticipate one another's needs to maintain student access with minimal disruptions? What's our signal when something needs clarification mid-lesson?
Reflection & Feedback	Transforming closure through growth and reflection	Promote continuity across teams by determining success strategies	Which routines, procedures, systems, or strategies from this year/semester/quarter should we recommend to the next team? Which routines, procedures, systems or strategies might we suggest tweaking? What is one thing we learned from each other that shaped our work?

Note. Table 18 summarizes the five emergent constructs that expand Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) model by synthesizing collaborative patterns across stages. These constructs provide a shared vocabulary for future TOD-Interpreter teams and serve as a conceptual bridge to Chapter 5 discussions.

Table 18 synthesizes the five emergent constructs that evolved across Tuckman's stages of group development. Collectively, they demonstrate how collaboration between a TOD and ASL interpreters develops through cycles of communication, reflection, and mutual adjustment rather than fixed phases. The subsequent sections examine each construct in greater depth.

Forming: Role Clarity Through Lived Practice

Because this team had already been working together for months before the study formally began, the forming stage did not begin with a traditional orientation or kickoff. Instead, role clarity developed organically through lived practice in small, repeated acts like deciding how vocabulary was previewed, where each person stood during instruction, when to pause for processing, and how to flag a digression without breaking the flow. Journal entries and margin notes indicate that these early agreements were largely unspoken, relying on accumulated experience rather than explicit conversation. This reliance on tacit understanding proved effective for the team in the short term but suggests a potential area for improvement in future collaborations. Based on this construct, future teams may benefit from introducing targeted, practice-oriented questions early in their work. For example, prompts such as, "Where do our responsibilities naturally overlap, and how do we clarify them?" or "What's one small adjustment we could make now to make each other more effective?" could help surface assumptions sooner, allowing role clarity to be reached more intentionally. Conceptually, this

reframes forming not just as a passive settling-in period but as a deliberate stage for shaping interactional norms before they become fixed.

Storming: Collaborative Recalibration and Navigating Fear of Judgment

During the storming stage, the team experienced moments when assumed roles and expectations clashed with the dynamic realities of classroom practice. Journal entries and interview reflections documented instances when responsibilities overlapped or when differing interpretations of a role created hesitation. At times, the desire to collaborate was tempered by an underlying fear of judgment, particularly when immediate decisions about student clarification or instructional pacing were needed. These moments often surfaced when a student required more in-depth support than planned, prompting quick recalibration but leaving questions unspoken. The construct that emerged, collaborative recalibration balanced against fear of overstepping, suggests that conflict in this stage is not always loud or disruptive. Sometimes it is quiet, internal, and marked by unspoken tensions. Based on this construct, future teams might benefit from deliberately creating space for targeted questions such as “If disagreement occurs, what’s our plan for addressing it?” and “When you’re feeling pulled in different directions internally, how can we make it easier to bring that to the table?” These proposed prompts acknowledge the emotional labor inherent in storming and offer structured entry points for addressing uncertainty before it erodes trust. Conceptually, this reframes storming as the management of silent tensions as much as overt disagreement, highlighting that much of alignment work occurs beneath the surface.

Norming: Role Fluidity and Communicative Alignment

During the norming stage, the team began to demonstrate a greater ease in shifting between clearly defined responsibilities and moments of shared action. Role fluidity emerged as

a defining construct, supported by communicative alignment that allowed the team to anticipate needs without extended discussion. Journal entries reflected how brief hallway exchanges, pre-class vocabulary checks, and unplanned assistance during instruction created a sense of mutual reliance. Interviews confirmed that this fluidity was not accidental but the result of deliberate adjustments and repeated shared experiences. The construct that emerged from this stage suggests that stability in a team does not require rigid boundaries but instead thrives when members can move fluidly between roles without undermining clarity. Based on this construct, future teams might benefit from introducing targeted questions such as “Should we keep a running shared document for vocabulary and key content?” and “If you need backup or additional support, what is our process for that?” These prompts can help solidify communicative alignment and ensure that fluidity does not result in uncertainty. Conceptually, this broadens norming to include the intentional cultivation of role flexibility as a marker of mature collaboration.

Performing: Adaptive Specialties Through Collaborative Alignment

By the performing stage, the team demonstrated an almost unspoken ability to adjust to changing circumstances without disrupting lesson flow or compromising student access. This adaptive expertise was evident in moments such as pivoting mid-lesson when technology failed, reassigning responsibilities when a student’s needs shifted unexpectedly, or modifying pacing when class energy changed. Margin notes recorded instances where these adjustments occurred seamlessly, requiring no verbal negotiation, and interviews reinforced that this adaptability sustained lesson quality even in the face of disruption. The construct that emerged from these experiences highlights that maturity in a team is not only about efficiency but also about the capacity to respond fluidly to evolving contexts without destabilizing the work. Based on this

construct, future teams might benefit from asking targeted questions such as “When circumstances change unexpectedly, how do we decide what adjustments to make?” and “What makes it possible for us to pivot without losing lesson quality or student access?” These prompts could help teams reflect on the strategies and communication patterns that allow for agility under pressure. Conceptually, this reframes performing as the development of adaptive expertise, an ability to embed flexibility within the fabric of collaborative practice.

Adjourning: Professional Visibility

In the adjourning stage, the team’s reflections revealed a tension between individual professional identity and the systemic expectations placed on their roles. Interviews and journal entries indicated that while there was pride in the collaborative growth achieved, there was also an awareness of the systemic invisibility of interpreters and the limits imposed by institutional structures. As the year closed, discussions often centered on what practices and routines should be carried forward for future teams and how to preserve the strengths of their collaboration in different configurations. The construct that emerged from these experiences, professional visibility, underscores that adjourning is not only about closure but also about intentional knowledge transfer and mutual recognition of contributions. Based on this construct, future teams might benefit from posing reflective questions such as “Which routines from this year should we recommend to the next team working with these students?” and “What is one thing I learned from you, and one thing you learned from me?” These reflective prompts can help ensure that the end of a collaborative cycle contributes to ongoing professional growth rather than requiring each new team to start from scratch. Conceptually, this reframes adjourning as a process of knowledge transfer and professional continuity, highlighting how intentional

reflection can strengthen future teams and sustain effective practices within DHH classroom contexts.

Integrating Emergent Constructs Across DHH Teaming

Taken together, these emergent constructs illustrate that collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters is not static but continuously shaped by lived practice, recalibration, role fluidity, adaptive specialties, and professional visibility. Each stage brought distinct opportunities and challenges, revealing that effective teamwork depends as much on intentional communication and trust as it does on professional skill. Yet, as these patterns became clearer, so too did my awareness that the dynamics we navigated were not just shaped by collective effort; they were also shaped by me. The constructs that emerged did not exist in a vacuum; they were intertwined with my own assumptions, positional authority, and ways of engaging with power in the classroom. Moving from the shared processes of the team to my personal role within them required a shift toward critical reflexivity, confronting the ways my identity, biases, and professional privilege influenced both our successes and our tensions.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 synthesizes insights gained from this research by revisiting its original purpose: to explore and critically reflect on my experiences as a signing, hearing teacher of the deaf (TOD) collaborating with two American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in a self-contained deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) science classroom. Utilizing an autoethnographic approach within the framework of Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development, I aimed to examine how our classroom interactions aligned with the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Additionally, I considered how my background as a TOD, having graduated from a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program, impacted my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, interpretation of findings, draws connections between emerging themes, codes, and Tuckman's (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development based on my journals, interpreter interviews, and convergence and divergence analysis. This interpretation situates our story within a broader context of teamwork in deaf education and illuminates the realities, challenges, and recommendations for fostering authentic collaboration. The second section, critical reflexivity, examines my assumptions, biases, and personal growth as I navigated my dual role as both a participant and researcher. This reflection highlights the dynamic nature of teamwork and acknowledges how my perspective influenced the meaning I derived from our experiences. The third section explores the implications of these findings for practice and professional collaboration. I discuss lessons learned from our team and opportunities for growth within interpreter and teacher preparation programs to better foster partnerships between the two professions in order to best serve DHH students. The fourth section offers my reflections on this

journey as an educator and researcher. I discuss how this research has shaped my understanding of collaboration, my professional identity, and my ongoing commitment to creating spaces for authentic teamwork centered around the needs of DHH students.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section, I carefully reconsider each research question and what they mean to me professionally and personally. Looking back through an autoethnographic lens, I recognize these insights are shaped by my own experiences, classroom interactions, and epiphanies along the way. Revisiting each research question has reminded me that teamwork is not perfect, tidy, or linearly dependent. It is complex, messy, frustrating, and demanding of humility, trust, and a growth mindset. By interpreting each question, I acknowledge how my positionality, which includes my hearing status and signing ability, has influenced my capacity to experience and reflect on collaboration and how I make sense of it.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: *What are my experiences collaborating with ASL interpreters in a DHH self-contained classroom?* Reflecting on this journey, reviewing my personal journals, and considering interpreter interviews and shared moments, I see more clearly that my experiences as a signing, hearing TOD working with ASL interpreters are more intricate and sensitive than I initially believed. I assumed my background and signing skills would facilitate smoother, fairer collaboration. I thought direct communication with my students would lessen the tensions that often arise when TODs rely solely on ASL interpreters for communication and access. However, these findings show that signing skills and good intentions do not automatically translate into daily trust and mutual understanding. I've learned that teamwork must be cultivated and nurtured like a garden. The process can be painful, awkward, and

repetitive, but it is essential. My experiences have shown me that collaboration is not one-sided; it is a living, dynamic process that requires presence, humility, and active engagement.

My journals show that this learning curve was steep. In the first weeks, I described lesson implementation and accessibility as “in sync,” but later my reflections revealed the quiet tension behind that assumption. In one early entry, I wrote about moving ahead in a lesson while the interpreter was still signing. Those small moments created big impacts on student accessibility and added an extra layer of stress for the interpreter, who was working to catch up and retain my message while still signing. It was in that moment that I felt a wave of guilt, embarrassment, and frustration; I should have known better. That reflection stayed with me. It reminded me that awareness and pacing are as much part of the instructional process as content. Slowing down was not a sign of weakness; rather, it was a form of respect for both the students and the interpreters.

Other entries captured a heavier emotional fatigue. After implementing a practical classroom job-application activity, I reflected and realized that I had asked so much of the interpreters during that lesson, and the exhaustion was clear on their faces. Later, we talked openly about sharing responsibilities differently, and direct and honest conversations like this highlighted the internal stressors and vantage points we brought to a lesson. I began to see that it wasn't just my internal pressure; the interpreters also had a lot. I began to see how tension, even internally, when acknowledged rather than avoided, could become a foundation for trust. The interpreters' steadiness during stressful days often grounded me more than any plan or routine. On one day when I felt overwhelmed, one interpreter simply said, “Just tell us where you need us.” This brief assurance offered after a chaotic class transition, captured how trust is built not through directives, but through empathy and presence. Such moments reminded me that collaboration is not procedural; it is relational and emotional. These reflections highlight that

teacher preparation cannot stop at language proficiency. Preservice programs must also teach emerging TODs how to build and maintain trust within interpreter teams, how to give and receive feedback, manage role overlap, and engage in reflective dialogue when tensions surface.

As I reflect, I notice moments when I relied too much on my “preparation” and failed to acknowledge or examine my own blind spots. There were times when I assumed the ASL interpreters and I were aligned, only to realize that our perceptions were not always in sync and caused internal stress. These experiences also made me aware of how powerful small choices can be. The quick check-ins before class, the unspoken cues during instruction, the willingness to say, “This isn’t working. How can we fix it?” These everyday actions often made the difference between lingering storming and trust that deepened.

I also learned that how we collaborated often shifted depending on each student’s language needs. When students had significant language deprivation, our teamwork demanded even clearer communication, frequent clarifications, and a willingness to adapt roles in the moment. My journals reminded me how exhausting and rewarding this could be: trying to sign, monitor comprehension, and anticipate interpreter timing all at once. Interpreter interviews echoed that same duality of fatigue and relief; evidence that we were learning in parallel rather than in isolation.

Throughout this process, I understand that my role as a signing, hearing TOD is not just about language proficiency and philosophy; it’s about privilege. It means asking myself, *Am I creating space for ASL interpreters to speak up when they see something I do not? Am I listening to learn or to defend? Am I truly listening, especially when their perspective challenges mine?* My reflections often circled back to those questions, especially after reading in the interviews that both interpreters sometimes hesitated to interrupt me because they “didn’t want to seem

disrespectful.” Realizing that we all carried that hesitation was uncomfortable but necessary. It taught me that openness must be practiced intentionally, not assumed. These insights remind me that genuine collaboration asks more of us than simply showing up with our degrees and practicum experience; we must incorporate our background into our current work, continually striving to improve and grow together each day.

My experiences in this self-contained DHH classroom showed me that the moments when I was willing to lean into discomfort, the moments when I admitted what I did not know, were the same moments when our team moved closer to what we wanted most: collaboration, shared responsibility, and participation to ensure DHH students had real, ongoing, and meaningful access to their education. Growth lived within the tension itself; every brave conversation, pause, and repair deepened our trust and made the work more authentic.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: *How do my experiences working with two ASL interpreters in a DHH self-contained classroom align with Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development?* When I first began this research, I thought Tuckman’s stages would provide a neat way to label growth. But the deeper I went, the more I saw that collaboration isn’t linear; it’s continuous, messy, and cyclical. Some days, we were forming and performing at the same time. Other days, on tiny moment such as a late student, a missed cue, a glance could send us right back to storming. The model didn’t organize my experience as it did mirror it.

Forming

In the beginning, structure was my safety net. We didn’t sit down formally and define and map out collaboration; we simply started working. I found comfort in our predictability, feeling anchored by structure as a way to manage uncertainty - predictability. Yet even in the

beginning of this study, my journal hinted at something unspoken beneath the smoothness. I journaled we were *getting along*, but it still felt delicate, like something that could tip easily if conflict arose. I was grateful for how easily we fit into our roles, but I was still cautious. The three of us seemed to embrace this stage. Interpreter 2 noted, “We spent the beginning chunk of the year trying to be clear about what our roles were, but also being transparent with the students.” The forming stage felt less about talking through expectations and more about discovering and naming them in action. Each routine, how we previewed vocabulary, when we paused for processing, and where we stood during instruction, became our forming as a team for students.

Looking back, this stage reflected the heart of the first construct: role clarity through lived practice. It wasn’t defined through formal planning but through repetition, observation, and shared adjustment. Each class period became a practice ground for refining cooperation and coordination and developing mutual awareness. The forming stage was not passive; it was slow and careful, building trust through presence and reliability.

Storming

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: *In what ways does my background as a graduate of a comprehensive deaf education teacher preparation program impact my ability to collaborate with ASL interpreters within a self-contained DHH classroom?* Graduating from a comprehensive TOD preparation program gave me a strong foundation in deaf education. The program emphasized full access for all DHH students and the importance of involving all stakeholders: students, families, interpreters, and school teams in building inclusive learning environments. It went beyond simply teaching me to sign by embedding Deaf culture into the

curriculum, encouraging active participation in community events, and building my confidence across a range of communication modalities. One of the most impactful aspects of my program was the practicum experience, where I worked alongside interpreters during my second year of graduate school. These early opportunities helped me enter Deaf spaces with greater confidence and cultural awareness, allowing me to engage more respectfully and effectively as a hearing professional. When I entered my own classroom, I drew on those lessons constantly, but my journals (documenting moments of uncertainty, boundary negotiation, and collaboration) and interpreter interviews revealed that experience alone did not remove the nuanced challenges of teamwork. I did not need interpreters for my own communication; I needed them to ensure full access for my students.

This distinction made a significant difference. My findings suggest that this comprehensive preparation set me apart from many teachers trained in aural/oral or listening and spoken language programs. Teachers emerging from strictly oral backgrounds often lack proficiency in ASL and receive little guidance on the interpreter's role. In these settings, the interpreter frequently becomes the primary bridge between teacher and student, not only for conveying student responses but also for helping the teacher understand classroom dynamics. This shift places almost all the responsibility for communication and learning access onto the interpreter. Instead of supporting the student alone, the interpreter must also support the teacher.

This dynamic expands the interpreter's role in significant ways. As my findings and past literature (McDermid, 2020; Seal, 2004) confirmed, interpreters in such situations often assume tasks that go beyond their professional scope. When teachers are underprepared in signing or unfamiliar with working with students experiencing language deprivation, interpreters are left to fill the gaps. They may be required to clarify or scaffold instruction in real time, adapt content

linguistically and cognitively, and simultaneously navigate the emotional and cultural complexities of classroom life. This can quickly lead to cognitive overload and emotional fatigue, particularly when interpreters must juggle instructional delivery, behavior management, and rapport-building with minimal input or support from the TOD. Interpreter Interviews 1-3 reflected these pressures clearly: interpreters described moments of emotional overwhelm, boundary strain, and the internal conflict between wanting to help and needing to preserve professional limits. My thematic coding connected those comments to several of my own journal entries where I noted similar tension when I accidentally over-directed or under-supported them during instruction. These points of friction became some of my greatest learning experiences.

Students, especially those with significant language deprivation, can also be affected by this imbalance. In the absence of strong teacher–student communication, students may form stronger bonds with the interpreter and experience their teacher only indirectly. This risks limiting the depth of academic and social-emotional interactions, and may reduce opportunities for authentic language modeling and trust-building, roles that ideally should be shared by both the TOD and interpreter. While interpreters strive to ensure access, they should not be left to carry the emotional and instructional burden alone. My journals often returned to this concern, especially after group activities, when I noticed students directing their questions and attention to the interpreter instead of me. This pattern made me realize how easily visibility and understanding of classroom roles can shift when students perceive the interpreter as the only and primary ASL model and direct line to communication. For students, this response was not intentional; it reflected their prior educational experiences with TODs from various teacher-preparation programs. Some had primarily interacted with hearing teachers who utilized ASL interpreters heavily for all signed communication, so students naturally associated ASL fluency

and linguistic authority with the interpreter's role rather than understanding that TODs can also support these skills.

Reflecting through this lens, I now more clearly see how my own preparation helped prevent this imbalance. My ASL proficiency allowed me to communicate directly with students, minimizing the interpreter's need to mediate on my behalf. At the same time, this experience revealed a deeper linguistic and accessibility challenge. Many students were still learning that a TOD might code-switch between English and ASL for clarity and expansion, and that both communication modes were integral to accessible instruction for the diverse learners in the classroom. What sometimes appeared as disengagement or confusion was often the result of unfamiliarity with bilingual instructional practice and procedures rather than disinterest. Recognizing this helped me better anticipate when to adjust language, provide explicit modeling, or pause to explain how the code-switching process, and how it supported their comprehension.

My background helped me notice when students required more direct ASL modeling, when to step in to clarify, and when to step back to preserve the flow of instruction. However, my journals and the interpreter interviews remind me that even with this foundation, collaboration was far from seamless. There were times when my clarity felt intrusive or my silence felt absent, illustrating that growth required constant recalibration. I also felt more confident honoring the interpreters' boundaries, and less likely to assume they should act as my voice or instructional assistant. Instead, we shared the responsibility of supporting students, each with defined but flexible roles.

Even so, these findings also highlight that strong preparation is not a guarantee for effortless teamwork. Despite my training, I still had to clarify roles, navigate misunderstandings, and remain open to feedback. The interpreters' reflections reinforced this reality; they described

moments when they hesitated to share feedback because they “didn’t want to seem disrespectful”. Reflecting on that reminded me how easily positionality can silence voices, even in well-intentioned teams. My reflections and the interpreters’ interviews reminded me that positionality, even when paired with good intentions, shapes how power is distributed within classroom teams. Being a hearing professional with signing skills does not automatically eliminate power dynamics. Preparation gave me the tools, but tension made me use them. Each challenge, whether reestablishing boundaries, revising expectations, or apologizing for miscommunication, became an act of professional growth. Real collaboration requires us to use them with ongoing self-awareness, humility, and a willingness to adjust in response to the lived experiences of our teammates.

Ultimately, my preparation program gave me a meaningful head start, but sustained collaboration required daily commitment, reflection, and recalibration. It required holding space for interpreter voices, being responsive to student needs, and remaining flexible in my approach. The documents together: journals showing my emotional processing, interpreter interviews providing perspective, and thematic coding linked shared experiences, illustrated that training is only the beginning. True collaboration is continuous, unpredictable at times, and deeply human. These experiences have deepened my understanding that effective teamwork between TODs and interpreters is not simply a product of training, but of how we translate that training into our everyday practice. Returning to the comprehensive program principles outlined in Chapter 2, this means embedding reflection, Deaf community connection, and shared responsibility as ongoing professional habits rather than one-time requirements. To truly center the needs of our DHH students, preparation and practice must remain in tandem.

Critical Reflexivity and Power

Stepping back to think critically and reflect on this process, I am reminded that autoethnographies ask us to do more than just tell our story. It challenges us to hold up a mirror to ourselves and examine what that story reveals about who we are, what we bring with us, and how that shapes what we see.

This study initially revealed to me that I believed my signing skills and background as a TOD graduate from a comprehensive program would ensure smooth and fair collaboration. I had a bias, thinking that because I was different from the *other* LSL TODs, I would not face misunderstandings or power issues with ASL interpreters. However, reflecting on everyday moments and listening to interpreters made me realize that trust, clarity, and role negotiation require ongoing attention and effort. Signing skills and program philosophy do not eliminate the need for humility or honest discussions about boundaries and expectations.

Throughout this study, I noticed how my roles as both the researcher and participant sometimes conflicted. I occasionally edited or softened my journal entries to avoid presenting myself negatively or admitting frustration. Analyzing my own reflections and coding the data pushed me to face moments of confusion or tension I might have otherwise ignored or minimized if I were not committed to honesty. Being both the experiencer and the analyst of those experiences meant that my discomfort, pride, or guilt sometimes clashed with my duty to be transparent and courageous.

This work has heightened my awareness of the subtle yet clear power and privilege I hold as a TOD working alongside ASL interpreters. I entered this collaboration with the authority typical of a teacher in their classroom; someone who plans lessons, sets the agenda, and is often seen as the IEP compliance enforcer and final decision-maker. The ASL interpreters did not

always have the same capacity to challenge my decisions or feel empowered to tell me when my directions might have crossed professional boundaries. I realized that I could rely on my positional power, assuming that my openness to feedback would always make it safe and transparent for the interpreters to approach me with concerns.

At the same time, this study helped me notice the emotional labor I carried too. I felt that constant pressure to *get it right*. To be the TOD who did not need “interpreting 101,” to honor the ASL interpreter’s role, and to protect students’ language access, all while balancing my own responsibilities to create and implement IEPs, advocate for student needs, teach curriculum, and monitor progress. I had to accept that I could not always anticipate every moment of storming or prevent every misunderstanding.

Through this reflection, I realize that I am still learning and will always be learning how to be a collaborator who is clear about my assumptions and blind spots. This study reminded me that true teamwork is built on more than shared goals; it’s built on daily acts of trust, flexibility, honest dialogue, power recognition, and vulnerability. It pushed me to see that reflexivity is not just an exercise or a moment in time; it’s a practice I must carry forward every day I walk into a classroom with my team.

Implications

Implications for Theory

This study contributes to the limited body of research examining collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters through an autoethnographic lens. While Tuckman’s (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) stages of group development provide a structural framework for identifying the cyclical nature of collaboration, my findings highlight the need to expand this theoretical model to capture the emotional labor, linguistic dynamics, and role fluidity within

DHH education teams, particularly when working with DHH students experiencing language deprivation. These findings reveal that collaboration is not a linear progression toward harmony with a clear endpoint, but an ongoing process of improvement that involves tension, repair, and realignment. By integrating autoethnographic reflection with Tuckman's stages, this research extends the theory to include the "messiness" and fluidity of interpersonal and linguistic negotiation, elements often missing in existing literature on team development within specialized Deaf Education contexts.

Additionally, this study positions collaboration within sociocultural and linguistic frameworks, where power, privilege, and access directly influence how teams function. It invites future researchers to use interpretive and critical lenses that explore how hearing status, signing proficiency, and professional preparation intersect to share communication, role boundaries, and equitable access for students. Expanding theoretical work in this area will help capture the lived realities of teams serving DHH students.

Implications for Practice

For practitioners, these findings suggest that effective collaboration between TODs and ASL interpreters must be intentionally cultivated through ongoing communication, reflection, and shared learning. Preparation programs for both roles should include structured and supervised opportunities for co-planning, feedback, and explicit role clarification. My journals and the interpreter interviews consistently revealed that trust and mutual understanding developed not through shared space alone but through deliberate conversations that acknowledged discomfort, clarified boundaries, and embraced differences.

Schools and districts can use these findings to design joint professional learning opportunities that bring TODs and interpreters together to analyze DHH classroom realities,

discuss boundaries, and collaboratively solve accessibility challenges. Furthermore, administrators should recognize that TOD-interpreter collaboration is pedagogical, not just a support service. Time for planning, debriefing, and relationship building should be embedded in scheduling structures, rather than viewed as optional.

Professional development must also extend beyond technical skill. TODs and interpreters need explicit support to strengthen soft skills my findings show are essential: active listening, clear boundary-setting, conflict resolution, and flexibility when student needs demand role adjustments. Regular, structured opportunities to plan together, reflect, and address moments of storming or tension before they escalate may strengthen team trust and resilience. As Bonebright (2010) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977) observed, teams do not move through stages in a neat line; they loop back when trust is tested. Collaboration must therefore be practiced and modeled in authentic contexts, not simply assumed because professionals share the same students.

Finally, schools must intentionally protect time for this work. Collaboration cannot be squeezed into hallway conversations or five-minute chats before class. Without formalized structures, teams will default to surface-level fixes that ignore deeper issues of role confusion, emotional fatigue, or inequity.

Implications for Policy

At the policy level, this study underscores the urgent need for explicit standards that define and support collaborative practices between TODs and ASL interpreters. Current frameworks, whether in state, licensure, or district evaluation systems, rarely account for the nuanced interdependence required for equitable access in DHH classrooms. Policies should reflect that interpreters and TODs are co-collaborators within the learning process, each bringing complementary specialties to ensure DHH students receive equitable access to instruction,

develop self-advocacy skills, and understand the roles so that they will be more independent with interpreters as adults.

These findings also affirm that comprehensive teacher preparation programs must become the norm rather than the exception. Engler and MacGregor (2018) defined comprehensive Deaf Education preparation programs as programs that “emphasize a dual commitment to Deaf cultural competence and flexible communication, ensuring graduates are equipped to provide accessible instruction in multiple modalities and collaborate effectively across professional boundaries”. These programs include integrated ASL and spoken-English training, ongoing engagement with the Deaf community, and supervised practicum experiences in diverse communication environments. By preparing teachers to support students across linguistic profiles rather than within a single communication philosophy, comprehensive programs produce teachers who can share accessibility responsibility with interpreters rather than rely on them for all language mediation.

Institutions and state agencies should invest in program models that emphasize meeting individual student needs, Deaf community collaboration, and authentic field experiences where collaboration and reflection are explicitly taught. Such systemic supports can reduce interpreter burn out, promote equity, and ensure that DHH students have consistent access to linguistically and culturally responsive professionals.

For TOD preparation programs specifically, these implications echo what Kurz et al. (2015) and Engler and MacGregor (2018) found in that direct ASL communication and Deaf cultural competence reduce interpreter burden and improve student access. However, signing fluency alone does not guarantee seamless teamwork. Comprehensive programs must intentionally prepare teachers to collaborate ethically and adaptively with interpreters in

authentic classroom contexts. Practicum experiences should position future TODs alongside interpreters to practice navigating role boundaries, clarifying expectations, and adapting to the linguistic and emotional needs of DHH students, particularly those with language deprivation.

This study also underscores the need for policy changes at both the state and district levels. Seal (2004) and Kurz et al. (2015) found that when TODs lack ASL fluency, responsibility for language access shifts almost entirely to interpreters, straining ethical boundaries and weakening student-teacher relationships. Policymakers should redefine what qualifies a TOD as “prepared”, ensuring programs include ASL proficiency, Deaf culture immersion, and coursework on collaborative teamwork.

District policies should also clarify professional boundaries for both TODs and interpreters, ensuring administrators understand the interpreter’s ethical framework. Johnson and Witter-Merithew (2004) cautioned that ethical missteps often occur when interpreters are used as aides or tutors rather than language professionals. Therefore, schools must budget for joint planning and debriefing as instructional essentials, not an optional courtesy.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study sought to provide a personal and nuanced look into my experiences collaborating with ASL interpreters, I acknowledge several key limitations that shape how these findings should be interpreted. As both the participant and researcher, my reflections were inevitably filtered through my own assumptions, positionality, and privilege as a hearing, signing TOD. Mather et al. (2018) reminded us that while autoethnography is powerful for surfacing hidden relational and emotional dynamics, it is also inherently shaped by the researcher’s lens. My dual role provided insider access to the

daily realities of collaboration but also risked selective attention, in that way felt “normal” in the moment may have obscured tensions or insights more visible to others.

My perspective is further limited because I cannot fully represent the interpreters’ experiences, even though I included their interview responses and noted moments of convergence and divergence in our viewpoints. They were participants, not co-autoethnographers, which means that their emotional labor, role stressors, or private reflections may extend beyond what I captured in this narrative. As L. J. Johnson & Witter-Merithew (2004) and Seal (2004) noted, role boundaries and power dynamics are often more complex than a single narrative can capture, so some layers of power negotiation or fatigue may remain partially invisible to this study.

Another significant limitation is that this study did not incorporate direct perspectives from the students who were at the very heart of this collaborative work. Antia and Kreimeyer (2001a) demonstrated that students’ perceptions of how they experience language access and peer interactions are critical, while Marschark et al. (2005) highlighted that Deaf students’ views of interpreted instruction and classroom communication are central to understanding how teamwork affects participation and learning. My findings would likely be strengthened, or challenged, by their voices. Without student perspectives, this narrative cannot fully capture how our collaboration influenced students’ sense of belonging, agency, or self-advocacy.

Additionally, my findings are grounded in the context of one self-contained DHH middle school classroom with two interpreters, within a site-based program where I worked as a signing, hearing TOD who graduated from a comprehensive TOD preparation program. I did not analyze the interpreters’ specific preparation programs in depth; rather,

I focused on how, in practice, they were (or were not) prepared to collaborate with a signing TOD. Seal (2004) and McDermid (2020) highlighted that interpreters are often not given structured training on how to work with TODs, especially signing TODs, which can affect how daily teamwork unfolds.

My reflections align closely with what Engler and MacGregor (2018) whose phenomenological case study of comprehensive Deaf Education teacher preparation programs documented how program philosophies that emphasize ASL acquisition, Deaf cultural immersion, and exposure to varied communication approaches can “empower and enable” pre-service TODs to work flexibly across diverse settings. She emphasized that these supportive conditions build stronger language skills, cultural awareness, and the professional confidence needed to work effectively with students, families, and school teams. Although Engler and MacGregor did not specifically examine collaboration with ASL interpreters, my own experiences suggest that this same foundation of signing proficiency and cultural competence can support clearer communication and teamwork with interpreters in practice. However, Engler and MacGregor cautioned that such conditions are not guaranteed; not all programs provide this depth of signing immersion or explicit collaboration practice. This means that my findings, rooted in my own background in a comprehensive TOD program, may not fully translate to contexts where TODs have minimal signing proficiency, limited Deaf cultural experience, or less preparation for interprofessional teamwork.

Likewise, my students had a wide range of language modalities and acquisition levels, with some experiencing significant language deprivation and others having more established ASL skills. Kurz et al. (2015) reminded us that direct ASL communication can

improve outcomes, but diverse language profiles inevitably shift how much an interpreter must clarify, expand, or adapt instruction. In classrooms where students have different language histories or where direct communication is more limited, collaboration may look very different.

These contextual and methodological boundaries align with what Bonebright (2010) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977) who emphasize that unresolved role ambiguity can prolong the storming phase, underscoring the need for clearer protocols, trust-building structures, and explicit role alignment to help teams move toward norming and performing.

In reflecting on the research process, I also recognize several methodological choices that could be refined in future studies to provide a more balanced and layered account of classroom collaboration. Because I served as both the participant and researcher, the timing and structure of data collection were largely determined by my own perspective. While my journals and interpreter interviews yielded valuable insights, they did not always capture interpreters' immediate perceptions of daily interactions. One improvement would be to invite interpreters to maintain short, session-based journals or logs rather than relying solely on end of week interviews. These daily reflections could provide more rich and time-sensitive accounts of how communication, fatigue, and role negotiation shift from lesson to lesson.

Using parallel journaling prompts for both the teacher and interpreters (e.g. "Describe a moment of smooth collaboration today" or "What challenged team communication?") could balance perspectives and allow cross-comparison of shared events. This approach would make visible differences in interpretation of the same

interaction, illuminating where miscommunication or unspoken expectations occur.

Additionally, including collaborative debrief sessions in which the team jointly reviewed selected entries could deepen reflexivity and ensure that emerging themes reflected shared understanding rather than a single researcher's interpretation.

As with all autoethnographic research, my findings are not meant to be generalized in the traditional sense. Instead, they offer a context-specific narrative designed to provoke reflection, dialogue, and empathy among professional working in Deaf Education. By acknowledging the methodological and contextual limits, this study underscores the collaboration is itself both the subject and method of research; it requires shared interpretation, ethical attentiveness, and ongoing recalibration. Future research should expand this work through comparative case studies, multi-site collaborations, and participatory approaches that center Deaf students' perspectives and engage interpreters as co-researchers. Such efforts could illuminate how different teacher preparation models, communication philosophies, and student language profiles shape collaborative practice across contexts.

These limitations point to both the vulnerability and value of insider research. By acknowledging its boundaries, this study underscores the need for clearer training frameworks, stronger role-clarity protocols, and ongoing professional development that prepares TODs and interpreters to navigate the emotional, linguistic, and ethical dimensions of teamwork. Doing so will strengthen future inquiry and ensure that collaboration remains grounded in the lived experience of those most affected, the Deaf and hard of hearing students we serve.

Dear Dani...It's going to be ok.

If I could talk to my past self, that brand-new TOD who stepped into her first job certain that her signing skills, good intentions, and eagerness to build relationships would be enough, I would tell her: Learning will come, but not the way you expect. It will come through the moments that hurt.

My first year in that large, fast-paced district was my first real lesson that good collaboration does not just happen because you want it to. I walked in believing that fostering relationships was one of my strengths. But what I quickly learned is that when you work with bigger teams, shifting roles, and constant change, miscommunication and frustration will surface whether you want them to or not. I learned that even when you care deeply, you can still miss how your position, your role, your authority, and your training shapes what others feel safe to say to you.

When that paraprofessional sat across from me and said, "*I'm just the para,*" I felt the weight of what happens when people feel invisible or unheard. That moment stayed with me because it was one of the first times I understood that power and trust in schools are not static. They're shaped every day by how we respond to conflict, how we listen when it would be easier to defend ourselves, and how we hold space for people to speak honestly.

This study pushed me to sit with that lesson all over again. My journals and interviews reminded me that even with a strong preparation program and signing ability, I still carried assumptions about how smooth teamwork should be. I still bristled at feedback. I still underestimated how much daily work it takes to build and protect trust. I see now that *learning comes through pain* not because the pain itself is the point but because discomfort is what makes

us pay attention. It breaks the illusion that we already know enough. It forces us to look closer at the parts of our practice we'd rather ignore.

If I could talk to that version of myself now, I would say: *Stay open when it feels easier to shut down. Keep listening when you'd rather explain yourself. Trust that the messiness is where you're becoming the teacher, and the teammate, your students need you to be.* That is the commitment I carry forward. The real work is showing up again tomorrow, ready to listen, ready to repair, ready to learn... even when it stings.

References

- Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.
- Adekeye, B. (2020). *Professional collaboration between sign language interpreters and deaf teachers in inclusive school for sustainable deaf education* (Unpublished master's thesis). Gallaudet University. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386333975_Professional_collaboration_between_sign_language_interpreters_and_deaf_teachers_in_inclusive_school_for_sustainable_deaf_education
- Alani, S., Boyer, V. E., Harten, A. C., Franca, M. C., Stierwalt J. A. G., & Pegoraro-Krook, M. I. (2024). Guidance on the effective collaboration with interpreters and translators in speech-language pathology. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 9(3), 795–803. https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_PERSP-23-00143
- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. (n.d.). *Listening and Spoken Language (LSL)*. Retrieved from <https://www.agbell.org/>
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241605280449>
- Antia, S. D., Jones, P., Reed, S., & Kreimeyer, K. H. (2011). *Social status and peer relationships of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in general education classrooms*. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 16(1), 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enq037>

- Antia, S. D., Knoors, H., & Marschark, M. (2019). Co-enrollment and the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing learners: Foundations, implementation, and challenges. In M. Marschark, S. Antia, & H. Knoors (Eds), *Co- enrollment in deaf education* (pp. 1–24). Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190912994.003.0001>
- Antia, S. D., & Kreimeyer, K. H. (2001a). Peer interactions of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 32(2), 154–164. [https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461\(2001/014\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2001/014))
- Antia, S. D., & Kreimeyer, K. H. (2001b). The role of interpreters in inclusive classroom. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 146, 355–365. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2012.0142>
- Antia, S. D., & Rivera, M. C. (2016). Instruction and service time decisions: Itinerant services to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 21(3), 293–302. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enw032>
- Antia, S. D., Stinson, M. S., & Gaustad, M. G. (2002). Developing membership in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in inclusive settings. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 7(3), 214–229. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/7.3.214>
- Beal, J. S., Scheetz, N. A., Trussell, J., McAllister, A., & Listman, J. D. (2018). *University American Sign Language learners: Longitudinal self- and faculty evaluation ratings*. Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/University-American-Sign-Language-Learners%3A-Self-Beal-Scheetz/502967681e63562c84782dfbbaa9e077f350cfcb>

- Bean, R., Goatley, V., & Kern, D. (2015). *Research brief: The multiple roles of school-based specialized literacy professionals*. International Literacy Association.
<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/literacy-professionals-research-brief.pdf>
- Berge, S., & Ytterhus, B. (2015). Deaf and hearing high-school students' expectations for the role of educational sign-language interpreter. *Society Health & Vulnerability*, 6(1), 28969. <https://doi.org/10.3402/shv.v6.28969>
- Blaiser, K. M., & Nevins, M. E. (2017). Practitioner reflection that enhances interprofessional collaborative practices for serving children who are deaf/hard-of-hearing. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 2(9), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.1044/persp2.SIG9.3>
- Bonebright, D. A. (2010). 40 years of storming: a historical review of Tuckman's model of small group development. *Human Resource Development International*, 13(1), 111–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13678861003589099>
- Borbasi, S., & Jackson D. (2012). *Navigating the Maze of Research*. Mosby Elsevier.
- Borders, C., & Clark-Bischke, C. (2021). *Itinerant services*, Routledge.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003233688-18/itinerant-services-christy-borders-christine-clark-bischke>
- Borg, E., & Drange, I. (2019). Interprofessional collaboration in school: Effects on teaching and learning. *Improving Schools*, 22(3), 251–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480219864812>
- Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life*. Left Coast Press.

- Brimm, K. E. (2018). *Collaboration with interpreters in K-12 education* [Master's thesis, St. Catherine University]. Sophia, the St. Catherine University.
https://www.academia.edu/95968235/Collaboration_with_Interpreters_in_K_12_Education
- Brownell, C. A., Ramani, G. B., & Zerwas, S. (2006). Becoming a social partner with peers: cooperation and social understanding in one- and two-year-olds. *Child Development*, (4), 803–821. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00904.x>
- Calderon, R., & Greenberg, M. T. (2011). *Social and emotional development of deaf children: Family, school, and program effects*. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies, Language, and Education* (Vol. 1, pp. 188–199). Oxford University Press.
- Cannon-Bowers, J. A., Salas, E., & Converse, S. A. (1993). Shared mental models in expert team decision making. In N. J. Castellan Jr. (Ed.), *Individual and group decision making: Current issues* (pp. 221–246). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cannon, J. E., & Luckner, J. L. (2016). Increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in deaf education teacher preparation programs. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161(1), 89–103. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2016.0014>
- Caselli, N., Lieberman, A., & Pyers, J. (2020). The ASL-CDI 2.0: an updated, normed adaptation of the Macarthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory for American Sign Language. *Behavior Research Methods*, 52(5), 2071–2084. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-020-01376-6>

- Castro Silva, J., Amante, L., & Morgado, J. (2017). School climate, principal support and collaboration among Portuguese teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(4), 505–520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1295445>
- Cawthon, S., Hersh, M., Kim, S.-H., & Online Research Lab. (2009). Professional development for teachers of students who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing: Facing the assessment challenge. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 154(1), 50–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2009.0007>
- Cawthon, S., & Leppo, R. (2013). Assessment accommodations on tests of academic achievement for students who are deaf or hard of hearing: a qualitative meta-analysis of the research literature. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 158(3), 363–376.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2013.0023>
- Chamberlain, K. (2021). *Understanding the roles and responsibilities of American sign language interpreters in educational settings* (Order No. 28545169) [Master's thesis, Minot State University]. ProQuest.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2548650094/DEB4449AED084BEEPQ/2?sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses>
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Chang, H. (2016). *Autoethnography as Method* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315433370>
- Cheng, Q., Roth, A., Halgren, E., & Mayberry, R. (2019). Effects of early language deprivation on brain connectivity: Language pathways in deaf native and late first-language learners of American Sign Language. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 13.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2019.00320>

- Coburn, C. E., & Russell, J. L. (2008). District policy and teachers' social networks. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(3), 203–235.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373708321829>
- Cogen, C., & Cokely, D. (2015). Preparing interpreters for tomorrow: Report on a study of emerging trends in interpreting and implications for interpreter education. *National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers*.
- Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education. (2019, February). *CCIE Accreditation Standards for interpreter education programs: Curriculum, faculty, candidates, resources, and evaluation at the provisional (initial) level*. Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education. Retrieved from <https://www.ccie-accreditation.org/standards/>
- Compton, M. V., Appenzeller, M., Kemmery, M., & Gardiner-Walsh, S. (2015). Itinerant teachers' perspectives of using collaborative practices in serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 160(3), 255–272.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2015.0023>
- Corbin, N. E., Buss, E., Leibold, L. J., Gordon, K. A., & Pillsbury, H. C. (2023). *Pediatric cochlear implantation for single-sided deafness: A review of candidacy, outcomes, and considerations*. *Hearing Research*, 432, 108708.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heares.2023.108708>
- Corcelles-Seuba, M., Sala-Bars, I., Soler, M., & Duran, D. (2024). Impact of reciprocal peer observation on teacher collaboration perceptions. *British Educational Research Journal*, 50(3), 981–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3958>

- Council on Education of the Deaf. (2019, February). *CED standards for programs preparing teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing: Curriculum, faculty, candidates, resources, and evaluation for core programs at the provisional (initial) level* [Program standards]. Council on Education of the Deaf. Retrieved from <https://www.councilondeafed.org/standards/>
- Council on Education of the Deaf. (2022). *CED standards for programs preparing teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing* [Program standards]. Council on Education of the Deaf. Retrieved from <https://www.councilondeafed.org/standards/>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Cripps, J., & Supalla, S. (2012). The power of spoken language in schools and deaf students who sign. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(16), 86–102.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275353854_The_Power_of_Spoken_Language_in_Schools_and_Deaf_Students_Who_Sign
- Crumb, L., Cartwright, A. D., Hammonds, D. S., & Harris, J. A. (2023). Code-switching 101: Black women counselor educators' personal and professional identity development. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 62(3), 233–247.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12274>
- Cypress, B. S. (2015). Qualitative research, the “what,” “why,” “who,” and “how”! *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 34(6), 356–361.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/dcc.000000000000150>

- Dahl, C., & Wilcox, S. (1990). Preparing the educational interpreter: A survey of sign language interpreter training programs. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 135(4), 275–279.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2012.0549>
- Davenport, C. A., & Weir, J. (2022). Early intervention to preschool transition for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing: A TEAM approach. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 55(2), 114–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00400599211068356>
- Davidson, K., Lillo-Martin, D., & Chen Pichler, D. (2014). Spoken English language development among native signing children with cochlear implants. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 19(2), 238–50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/ent045>
- Davison-Mowle, J., Leigh, G., Duncan, J., & Arthur-Kelly, M. (2018). Description of the direct teaching activities of itinerant teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students. *Deafness & Education International*, 20(1), 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14643154.2018.1442908>
- Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2013). *The demand-control schema: Interpreting as a practice profession*. Northwestern University Press.
- Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q., Jr. (2014). Application of demand-control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 6(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/6.1.1>
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. McGraw-Hill. (Introduced four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, and methodological.)
- Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. SAGE Publications.

- Dickinson, J., & Turner, G. H. (2008). Deaf students and interpreters in the mainstream: A tale of two cities. In C. Valero Garcés & A. Martin (Eds.), *Crossing Borders in Community Interpreting: Definitions and dilemmas* (pp. 231–252). John Benjamins.
<https://www.benjamins.com/catalog/btl.76.12dic>
- Dobbs-Oates, J., & Wachter Morris, C. A. (2016). The case for interprofessional education in teacher education and beyond. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42, 50–65.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2015.1131363>
- Dodd, E., & Scheetz, N. (2003). Preparing today's teachers of the Deaf and hard of hearing to work with tomorrow's students: A statewide needs assessment. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 148(1), 25–30.
- Dolman, D. (2008). College and university requirements for teachers of the deaf at the undergraduate level: A twenty-year comparison. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 153(3), 322–327. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.0.0049>
- Dorn, B. (2019). *Exploring successful partnerships between teachers of students who are deaf: An Australian case study* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Northern Colorado]. UNCO Open. <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations/628/>
- Dornan, D., Hickson, L., Murdoch, B., & Houston, T. (2010). Outcomes of an auditory-verbal therapy program for children with hearing loss: A comparative study. *Deafness & Education International*, 12(3), 152–168.
- Easterbrooks, S. R., & Stephenson, B. (2012). A systematic review of CED-accredited teacher prep programs. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 157(1), 48–60.

- Ediyanto, Kawai, N., Prabowo, E., & Rintayati, P. (2018). Inclusive education in Indonesia from the perspective of Widyaaiswara in Center for Development and Empowerment of Teachers and Education Personnel of Kindergartens and Special Education. *Journal of Special Education Research*, 7(1), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.6033/specialeducation.7.9>
- Educational Audiology Association. (2018). *Supporting students who are deaf and hard of hearing: Shared and suggested roles of educational audiologists, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, and speech-language pathologists* [Position statement]. Educational Audiology Association. Retrieved from <https://www.edaud.org/position-stat/15-position-02-18.pdf>
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), Article 10. <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589>
- Engler, K. S., & MacGregor, C. J. (2018). Deaf education teacher preparation: A phenomenological case study of a graduate program with a comprehensive philosophy. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 162(5), 388–418. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2018.0001>
- Esera, T. (2008). An insight into the educational needs of deaf high school students, Interviews with school staff and students. *KAIRARANGA*, 9(2), 32–36. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ej914629>
- Estabrooks, W., MacIver-Lux, K., & Rhoades, E. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Auditory-Verbal Therapy: Science, Research, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Plural Publishing.
- Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (2015). <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

- Fakhrian, A., & Luardini, M. (2022). Codes across languages at Kedai Inggris coffee shop: An autoethnography story. *Edulite Journal of English Education Literature and Culture*, 7(1), 44.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367773056_Codes_across_languages_at_Kedai_Ingris_Coffee_Shop_An_autoethnography_story
- Fellinger, J., Holzinger, D., & Pollard, R. (2012). *Mental health of deaf people. The Lancet*, 379(9820), 1037–1044. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(11\)61143-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(11)61143-4)
- Fenwick, J., & Kelly, S. (2023). Right here, right now: Effective interprofessional collaboration in education from the perspectives of primary school teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 58, 201–215.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-023-00279-2>
- Ferré, G. J. (2018). Sign language interpreter preparation programs: Linguistic and cultural competence perspectives. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 10(2), 1–20.
<https://www.cit-asl.org/ijie/>
- Fitzmaurice, S. (2017). Unregulated autonomy: Uncredentialed educational interpreters in rural schools. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 162(3), 253–264.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2017.0024>.
- Flexer, C. A. (2011). *The listening brain: Hearing for learning. The ASHA Leader*, 16(12), 14–17. <https://doi.org/10.1044/leader.FTR2.16122011.14>
- Foster, S., & Cue, K. (2009). Roles and responsibilities of itinerant specialist teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 153(5), 435–49.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.0.0068>

- Friend, M., & Bursuck, W. B. (2006). *Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2013). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Furness, E., Li, I. W., Patterson, L., Brennan-Jones, C. G., Eikelboom, R. H., Cross, D., & Fisher, C. (2019). A qualitative exploration of the role and needs of classroom teachers in supporting the mental health and well-being of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 50*(3), 399–415.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_LSHSS-18-0085
- Gallagher, A. L., Murphy, C. A., Conway, P. F., & Perry, A. (2020). Establishing premises for inter-professional collaborative practice in school: Inclusion, difference and influence. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 43*(20), 2909–2918.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2020.1725154>
- Ganek, H. V., Cushing, S. L., Papsin, B. C., & Gordon, K. A. (2020). Cochlear implant use remains consistent over time in children with single-sided deafness. *Ear and Hearing, 41*(3), 678–685. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AUD.0000000000000797>
- García-Martínez, I., Fernández-Batanero, J. M., & Rodríguez-García, A. M. (2021). Mapping teacher collaboration for school success: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 667751. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.667751>
- Gardner, L., Campbell, J. M., Gilchrest, C., McClain, M. B., & Shahidullah, J. D. (2022). Identification of autism spectrum disorder and interprofessional collaboration between school and clinical settings. *Psychology in the Schools, 59*(7), 1308–1318.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22673>

- Gebhardt, M., Schwab, S., Krammer, M., & Gegenfurtner, A. (2015). General and special education teachers' perceptions of teamwork in inclusive classrooms at elementary and secondary schools. *Journal for Educational Research Online*, 7(2), 129–146.
https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2015/11493/pdf/JERO_2015_2_Gebhardt_et_al_General_and_special_education.pdf
- Goberis, D., Beams, D., Dalpes, M., Abrisch, A., Baca, R., & Yoshinaga-Itano, C. (2012). The missing link in language development of deaf and hard of hearing children: Pragmatic language development. *Seminars in Speech and Language*, 33(04), 297–309.
<https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0032-1326916>
- Goddard, Y. L., Goddard, R. D., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). A theoretical and empirical investigation of teacher collaboration for school improvement and student achievement in public elementary schools. *Teachers College Record*, 109(4), 877–896.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810710900401>
- Goering, S. (2015). Rethinking disability: The social model of disability and chronic disease. *Current Reviews in Musculoskeletal Medicine*, 8(2), 134–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12178-015-9273-z>
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–606. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf>
- Goldblat, E., & Most, T. (2018). Cultural identity of young deaf adults with cochlear implants in comparison to deaf without cochlear implants and hard-of-hearing young adults. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 23(3), 228–239.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/eny007>

- Gregersen, E. (2022). Telling stories about the law school: autoethnography and legal education. *The Law Teacher*, 56(2), 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2021.1949182>
- Griffin, P. (2018). Bilingual-bicultural education for Deaf children: Past, present, and future. *Deafness & Education International*, 20(3–4), 100–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14643154.2018.1551050>
- Gustafson, S. J., Newsome, E., Pilling, E., & Segura, E. (2024). Survey of collaboration supporting students who are deaf and hard of hearing. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 29(4), 517–526. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enae006>
- Haegele, J. A., & Hodge, S. (2016). Disability discourse: Overview and critiques of the medical and social models. *Quest*, 68(2), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2016.1143849>
- Hall, M. L., Eigsti, I. M., Bortfeld, H., & Lillo-Martin, D. (2018). Executive function in deaf children: Auditory access and language access. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 61(8), 1970–1988. https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_JSLHR-L-17-0281
- Hall, M. L., Hall, W. C., & Caselli, N. K. (2019). Deaf children need language, not (just) speech. *First Language*, 39(4), 367–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142723719834102>
- Hall, W. C. (2017). What you don't know can hurt you: The risk of language deprivation by impairing sign language development in deaf children. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 21(5), 961–965. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-017-2287-y>
- Hallahan, D. P., & Kauffman, J. M. (2003). *Exceptional learners, introduction to special education*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (4th ed.). Routledge.

- Halpin, P., & Shaffer, L. (2023). Life science & interpreting students: an interdisciplinary healthcare role-playing activity. *American Physiological Society*, 38(S1), 1548–9213.
<https://doi.org/10.1152/physiol.2023.38.S1.5731552>
- Hargreaves, A., & O'Connor, M. T. (2018). Solidarity with solidity: The case for collaborative professionalism. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(1), 20–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721718797116>
- Hartman, M. C., Smolen, E. R., & Powell, B. (2023). Curriculum and instruction for deaf and hard of hearing students: evidence from the past—considerations for the future. *Education Sciences*, 13(6), 533. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13060533>
- Hasko-Dunagan, J., & Weirick, W. (2018). *Brainstorming: Collaboration between teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and educational interpreters*.
[https://www.rit.edu/ntid/sites/rit.edu.ntid/files/Hasko%2C%20Weirick%20\(2018\)%20Brainstorming%20Collaboration%20between%20TODHHs%20and%20Ed.%20Interpreters.pdf](https://www.rit.edu/ntid/sites/rit.edu.ntid/files/Hasko%2C%20Weirick%20(2018)%20Brainstorming%20Collaboration%20between%20TODHHs%20and%20Ed.%20Interpreters.pdf)
- Hauser, P. C., Lukomski, J., & Hillman, T. (2008). *Development of deaf and hard-of-hearing students' executive function*. In M. Marschark & P. C. Hauser (Eds.), *Deaf Cognition: Foundations and Outcomes* (pp. 286–308). Oxford University Press.
- Hendry, G., Hendry, A., Ige, H., & McGrath, N. (2020). “I was isolated and this was difficult”: Investigating the communication barriers to inclusive further/higher education for deaf Scottish students. *Deafness & Education International*, 23(4), 295–312.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14643154.2020.1818044>

- Hernandez, S. (2013). *Collaboration in special education: Its history, evolution, and critical factors necessary for successful implementation*. Semantics Scholar.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Collaboration-in-Special-Education%3A-Its-History%2C-Hernandez/b348c25d6455f8137f13f943d49b28aec0d7cb61>
- Hervais-Adelman, A., Moser-Mercer, B., & Golestani, N. (2015). Brain functional plasticity Associated with the emergence of expertise in extreme language control. *NeuroImage*, 114, 264–274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2015.03.072>
- Hintermair, M. (2008). *Self-esteem and satisfaction with life of deaf and hard-of-hearing people—A resource-oriented approach to identity work*. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 13(2), 278–300. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enm054>
- Hoffmeister, R. J. (1996). Cross-cultural misinformation: What does special education say about Deaf people. *Disability & Society*, 11(2), 171–190.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599650023218>
- Hoffmeister, R. J., & Caldwell-Harris, C. L. (2014). Acquiring English as a second language via print: The task for deaf children. *Cognition*, 132, 229–242. Holcomb, L., Dostal, H., & Wolbers, K. (2023). Characteristics of deaf emergent writers who experienced language deprivation. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 45(3–4), 358–379.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2014.03.014>
- Hogan, S. C., Stokes, J., White, G., Tyszkiewicz, E., & Woolgar, A. (2008). An evaluation of auditory verbal therapy using the rate of early language development as an outcome measure. *Deafness & Education International*, 10(3), 143–167.

- Holcomb, L., Dostal, H., & Wolbers, K. (2023). Characteristics of deaf emergent writers who experienced language deprivation. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 45(3–4), 358–379.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2023.2169412>
- Holcomb, T. K. (2013). *Introduction to American Deaf Culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Holtz, R. (2014). Reading between the signs: Intercultural communication for sign language interpreters. *Journal of International Students*, 4(1), 106–108.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v4i1.501>
- Hrastinski, I., & Wilbur, R. (2016). Academic achievement of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in an ASL/English bilingual program. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 21(2), 156–170. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/env072>
- Humphrey, C. (2015). *Job satisfaction, role strain, burnout, and self-care among American Sign Language/English interpreters*. Semantics Scholar.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Job-Satisfaction%2C-Role-Strain%2C-Burnout%2C-and-Among-Humphrey/fc9f039cc98c0f32d6dbb39710e909f8590e75c1>
- Humphrey, J. H., & Alcorn, B. J. (2001). *So you want to be an interpreter? An introduction to sign language interpreting* (3rd ed.). H&H Publishers.
- Humphries, T., Kushalnagar, P., Mathur, G., Napoli, D. J., Padden, C., Rathmann, C., & Smith, S. R. (2016). Language acquisition for deaf children: Reducing the harms of zero tolerance to the use of sign languages. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 20(2), 366–374. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-015-1910-z>
- Humphries, T. L., & Allen, B. M. (2008). Reorganizing teacher preparation in deaf education. *Sign Language Studies*, 8(2), 160–180. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2008.0000>

- Humphries, T. L., Kushalnagar, P., Mathur, G., Napoli, D. J., Padden, C., Rathmann, C., & Smith, S. R. (2012). Language acquisition for deaf children: Reducing the harms of zero tolerance to the use of sign languages. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 9(1), 16.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7517-9-16>
- Hurwitz, T. (1995). *Educational interpreting: Report of the National Task Force on Educational Interpreting*. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 140(1), 62–66.
- Hutter, K. F. (2019). *Educational interpreters for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing: Preparation, role clarity, and collaboration in K–12 settings* (Doctoral dissertation). University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Retrieved from
https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Hutter_uncg_0154D_13142.pdf
- Hyde, M. B., & Power, D. J. (1991). Teachers' use of simultaneous communication: Effects on the signed and spoken components. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 136(5), 381–387.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2012.0434>
- Idol, L., Nevin, A., & Paolucci-Whitcomb, P. (2000). Collaborative consultation. Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).
<http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title20/chapter33&edition=prelim>
- Ingham-Broomfield, R. (2015). A nurses' guide to qualitative research. *Aust J Adv Nurs*. 2015, 32(3), 34–40. <https://doi.org/10.37464/2015.323.1578>
- Itoi, H. (2018). Autoethnography as a research method in education. *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Practice*, 20(1), 1–8.
- Irvine Saenz, T., & Langdon, H. W. (2019). Speech-language pathologists' collaboration with interpreters: Results of a current survey in California. *Translation & Interpreting*, 11(1), 43–62. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.111201.2019.a03>

- Jacobowitz, E. L. (2005). American Sign Language teacher preparation programs in the United States. *Sign Language Studies*, 6(1), 76–110. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2006.0003>
- Johnson, C. D. (2014). Managing hearing loss in schools: FM/DM systems, classroom acoustics, and hearing assistive technology. In J. Madell & C. Flexer (Eds.), *Pediatric Audiology: Diagnosis, Technology, and Management* (2nd ed., pp. 325–344). Thieme Medical Publishers.
- Johnson, L. J., & Witter-Merithew, A. (2004). *Toward competent practice: Conversations with stakeholders* (Final Report, National Interpreter Education Project). Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. Retrieved from https://www.unco.edu/national-interpreter-education-center/pdf/toward_competent_practice.pdf
- Joint Committee on Infant Hearing. (2019). *Year 2019 position statement: Principles and guidelines for early hearing detection and intervention programs*. *Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention*, 4(2), 1–44.
- Jones, T. W., & Ewing, K. M. (2002). An analysis of teacher preparation in deaf education: programs approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 147(5), 71–78. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2012.0246>
- Kampwirth, T. J. (2003). *Collaborative consultation in the schools: Effective practices for student learning and behavior problems* (2nd ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- Kelly, J. F., McKinney, E. L., & Swift, O. (2020). Strengthening teacher education to support deaf learners. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(13), 1289–1307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1806366>
- Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., Dimino, J., Schumm, J., Shay, B., & Bryant, D. (2002). *Collaborative strategic reading*. Sopris West.

- Knoors, H., & Marschark, M. (2012). Language planning for the 21st century: Revisiting bilingual language policy for deaf children. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 17(3), 291–305. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/ens018>
- Kotzé, H. (2014). Educational interpreting: A dynamic role model. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*, 43, 127–145. <https://doi.org/10.5842/43-0-147>
- Kuntze, M. (2014). Assessment of ASL learning: Implications for teaching. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of deaf studies, language, and education* (Vol. 2, pp. 219–230). Oxford University Press.
- Kurowski, A. L., van der Veen, C., & Peetsma, T. (2022). Inclusive education: A bibliometric review and content analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(9), 929–949. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1867380>
- Kurz, C. A., Eagle, S., & Lehrman, J. (2015). *Role of interpreting in mainstreamed math classes: Deaf students' perceptions and learning*. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 20(1), 72–80.
- Kusters, A., De Meulder, M., & O'Brien, D. (2017). Innovations in Deaf Studies: Critically mapping the field. *Routledge*.
- Kvam, M. H., Loeb, M., & Tambs, K. (2007). *Mental health in deaf adults: Symptoms of anxiety and depression among hearing and deaf individuals*. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 12(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enl015>
- Lambez, T., Nagar, M., Shoshani, A., Nakash, O. (2020). The association between deaf identity and emotional distress among adolescents. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 25(3), 251–260. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enz051>

- Langdon, H. W. (2020). Cómo lograr una colaboración óptima entre un intérprete y el logopeda o maestro de audición y lenguaje en la escuela. *Revista de Logopedia, Foniatría y Audiología*, 40(4), 187–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rlfa.2020.06.003>
- Langer, E. C. (2004). Perspectives on educational interpreting from educational anthropology and an Internet discussion group. In E. A. Winston (Ed.), *Educational interpreting: How it can succeed* (pp. 91–112). Gallaudet University Press.
- Lenihan, S. (2010). Preparing teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing: A survey of program philosophy and practice. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 155(3), 357–369.
- Lersilp, S. (2016). *Hearing-impaired students' use of classroom interpreters in Thailand. Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(15), 78–84.
- Lillo-Martin, D., Quadros, R. M. de, & Chen Pichler, D. (2014). Acquisition of sign languages. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies, Language, and Education* (Vol. 2, pp. 49–60). Oxford University Press.
- Livingston, S. (1997). *Rethinking the education of deaf students: Theory and practice from a teacher's perspective*. Semantic Scholar.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Rethinking-the-Education-of-Deaf-Students%3A-Theory-a-Livingston/a70f9d5e4c2ef3c8f1026e5e578ab29f1553563c>
- Louie, N. L. (2016). Tensions in equity- and reform-oriented learning in teachers' collaborative conversations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 53, 10–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.10.001>
- Luckner, J. L., & Carter, K. (2001a). Essential components for optimal outcomes in deaf education: A review of the literature. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 146(1), 7–15.

- Luckner, J. L., & Muir, S. (2001b). *Successful students who are deaf in general education settings. American Annals of the Deaf, 146*(5), 435–445.
- Luft, P. (2008). Examining educators of the deaf as “highly qualified” teachers: Roles and responsibilities under IDEA and NCLB. *American Annals of the Deaf, 152*(5), 429–440.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2008.0014>
- Luft, P. (2017). What is different about deaf education? The effects of child and family factors on educational services. *The Journal of Special Education, 51*(1), 27–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466916660546>
- Macnamara, B., & Conway, A. (2016). Working memory capacity as a predictor of simultaneous language interpreting performance. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition, 5*(4), 434–444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2015.12.001>
- Marmor, G. S., & Petitto, L. (1979). Simultaneous communication in the classroom: How well is English grammar represented? *Sign Language Studies, 23*, 99–136.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.1979.0010>
- Marschark, M., Edwards, L., Peterson, C., Crowe, K., & Walton, D. (2019). Understanding theory of mind in deaf and hearing college students. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 24*(2), 104–118. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/eny039>
- Marschark, M., & Hauser, P. C. (2012). Educating deaf children: Language, cognition, and learning. *Deafness & Education International, 14*(3), 136–160.
<https://doi.org/10.1179/1557069X12Y.0000000010>
- Marschark, M., & Knoors, H. (2018). Sleuthing the 93% solution in deaf education. In H. Knoors & M. Marschark (Eds.), *Evidence-based practices in deaf education* (pp. 1–30). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190880545.003.0001>

- Marschark, M., Lang, H. G., & Albertini, J. A. (2002). *Educating deaf students: From research to practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Marschark, M., Leigh, G., Sapere, P., Burnham, D., Convertino, C., Stinson, M., Knoors, H., Vervloed, M. P. J., & Noble, W. (2006). Benefits of sign language interpreting and text alternatives for deaf students' classroom learning. *Journal of deaf studies and deaf education*, 11(4), 421–437. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enl013>
- Marschark, M., Sapere, P., Convertino, C., & Seewagen, R. (2005). Classroom interpreting and visual information processing in mainstream education for deaf students: Live or Memorex®? *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(1), 121–161. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312042001121>
- Marschark, M., Sarchet, T., & Trani, A. (2016). Effects of hearing loss and sign language use on working memory and visual-spatial processing. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 21(2), 148–155.
- Marschark, M., Spencer, P. E., Adams, J., & Sapere, P. (2011). Teaching to the strengths and needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26(1), 17–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2011.543542>
- Mather, M., Hamilton, D., Robalino, S., & Rousseau, N. (2018). Going where other methods cannot: a A systematic mapping review of 25 years of qualitative research in otolaryngology. *Clinical Otolaryngology*, 43(6), 1443–1453. <https://doi.org/10.1111/coa.13200>
- Mayberry, R. I., & Eichen, E. B. (1991). The long-lasting advantage of learning sign language in childhood: Another look at the critical period for language acquisition. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 30(4), 486–512.

- Mayberry, R. I., & Lock, E. (2003). Age constraints on first versus second language acquisition: Evidence for linguistic plasticity and epigenesis. *Brain and Language*, 87(3), 369–384.
- McDermid, C. (2020). Educational interpreters, deaf students and inclusive education? *Turkish Journal of Special Education Research and Practice*, 2(1), 27–46.
<https://doi.org/10.37233/TRSPED.2020.0107>
- McDermid, C. (2009). Educational interpreters for the deaf: Job ambiguity and role conflict. *Journal of Interpretation*, 19(1), 1–21.
https://www.academia.edu/130409448/Educational_Interpreters_for_the_Deaf_Job_Ambiguity_and_Role_Conflict
- McLaughlin, M. W., & Talbert, J. E. (2001). *Professional communities and the work of high school teaching*. University of Chicago Press.
- McMahon, J., & McGannon, K. (2017). Re-immersing into elite swimming culture: A meta-autoethnography by a former elite swimmer. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 34(3), 223–234.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2016-0134>
- Min, S., Modeste, M. E., Salisbury, J., & Goff, P. T. (2016). Heeding the CALL (comprehensive assessment of leadership for learning): An inquiry into instructional collaboration among school professionals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(2), 135–151.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-07-2014-0075>
- Mitchell, R. E., & Young, T. A. (2023). How many people use sign language? A National Health Survey-based estimate, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 28(1), 1–6.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enac031>

- Mitchiner, J. (2022). Review of the book *Deaf Culture: Exploring Deaf Communities in the United States*, by I. W. Leigh et al. *Sign Language Studies*, 22(3), 542–545.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2022.0005>
- Moeller, M. P., & Tomblin, J. B. (2015). An introduction to the outcomes of children with hearing loss study. *Ear and Hearing*, 36(1 Suppl), 4S–13S.
- Montgomery, M. S., & Akerson, A. (2019). Facilitating collaboration through a co-teaching field experience. *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, 21(1).
<https://doi.org/10.4148/2470-6353.1284>
- Moolenaar, N. M., Slegers, P. J. C., & Daly, A. J. (2012). Teaming up: Linking collaboration networks, collective efficacy, and student achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 251–262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.10.001>
- Moore, D. F. (2001). *Educating the deaf: Psychology, principles, and practices* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Muckenthaler, M., Tillmann, T., Weiß, S., & Kiel, E. (2020). Teacher collaboration as a core objective of school development. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 31(3), 486–504. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2020.1747501>
- Mugeere, A. B., Atekyereza, P., Edward K. Kirumira, E. K., & Hojer, S. (2015). Deaf identities in a multicultural setting: The Ugandan context. *African Journal of Disability*, 4(1), a69.
<https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v4i1.69>
- Murray, J. B., Klinger, L., & McKinnon, C. C. (2007). The deaf: an exploration of their participation in community life. *OTJR: Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*. 27(3), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/153944920702700305>

- Murray, J. J., Hall, W., & Snoddon, K. (2019). Education and health of children with hearing loss: The necessity of signed languages. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 97(10), 711–716. <https://doi.org/10.2471/blt.19.229427>
- Musyoka, M. M. (2023). Translanguaging in bilingual deaf education teacher preparation programs. *Languages*, 8(1), 65. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010065>
- National Association of Interpreters in Education. (2021). *Educational Interpreter Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from NAIE website.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). *Students with disabilities: Percentage distribution of school-age students served under IDEA, Part B, by educational environment and type of disability—fall 2022*. In *The Condition of Education 2024: Fast Facts* (Table 204.60). U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>
- Neild, R., & Fitzpatrick, M. (2020). Overview of assessment for deaf and hard of hearing students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(3), 331–343. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22317>
- Nicodemus, B., Swabey, L., Taylor, M., & Metzger, M. (2014). *Toward a theoretical model of interpreting into English: Making explicit what interpreters do implicitly*. *International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research*, 6(2), 1–18.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).
- Ntinda, K., Thwala, S., & Tfusi, B. (2019). Experiences of teachers of deaf and hard- of- hearing students' in a special needs school: An exploratory study. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 7(7), 79. <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v7i7.4274>

- Ott, L., Jantz, P. B., & de Wit, M. (2020). *The role of educational interpreters in mainstream classrooms: Managing discourse and participation*. *Journal of Interpretation*, 29(1), Article 4.
- Page, T., Harrison, M., Moeller, M., Oleson, J., Arenas, R., & Spratford, M. (2018). Service provision for children who are hard of hearing at preschool and elementary school ages. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 49(4), 965–981.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_LSHSS-17-0145
- Park, S., Henkin, A. B., & Egley, R. (2005). Teacher team commitment, teamwork and trust: exploring associations. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(5), pp. 462–479.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230510615233>
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Plakhotnik, M. S. (2020). Understanding social identity through autoethnography: Building intercultural communication competencies in higher education classrooms. In *Multicultural instructional design* (pp. 1414–1435). IGI Global.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-9279-2.ch067>
- Poerwandari, E. K. (2021). Reflexivity and positionality in qualitative research. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Review*, 8(1), 1–13.
- Priddis, H. (2015). Autoethnography and severe perineal trauma—an unexpected journey from disembodiment to embodiment. *BMC Women S Health*, 15(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-015-024hs9-3>

- Prinzi, L. M. (2022). Deaf student–interpreter relationships and feedback practices in k-12 mainstream deaf education. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 28(1), 68–83. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enac026>
- Prinzi, L. M. (2024). *The interpreter's role and deaf students' autonomy in mainstream classrooms*. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 29(3), 412–423. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enac009>
- Ratnapalan, S., & Haldane, V. (2022). We go farther together: practical steps towards conducting a collaborative autoethnographic study. *JBIEvidence Implementation*, 20(2), 113–116. <https://doi.org/10.1097/XEB.0000000000000302>
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (2007). *Standard Practice Paper: Interpreting in Educational Settings*. [Position Statement]. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.
- Reuterswärd, M., & Hylander, I. (2017). Shared responsibility: School nurses' experience of collaborating in school-based interprofessional teams. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 31(2), 253–262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12337>
- Rhoades, E. (2013). Interactive silences: evidence for strategies to facilitate spoken language in children with hearing loss. *The Volta Review*, 113(1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.17955/tvr.113.1.727>
- Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S. O., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. A. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475–514. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215585562>
- Rosen, R. S. (2006). An unintended consequence of IDEA: American Sign Language, the deaf community, and deaf culture into mainstream education. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 26(2). <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v26i2.685>

- Russell, D. (2005). Consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. *Topics in signed language Interpreting: Theory and practice*. John Benjamins.
- Russell, D., & Shaw, R. (2016). Power and privilege: An exploration of decision-making of interpreters. *Journal of Interpretation*, 25(1), Article 7.
<https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol25/iss1/7>
- Saenz, T. I., & Langdon, H. W. (2019). Speech-language pathologists' collaboration with interpreters: Results of a current survey in California. *Translation & Interpreting*, 11(1), 43–62. <https://doi.org/10.12807/TI.111201.2019.A03>
- Salas, E., Sims, D. E., & Burke, C. S. (2005). Is there a “Big Five” in teamwork? *Small Group Research*, 36(5), 555–599. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496405277134>
- Salcinovic, B., Drew, M. K., Dijkstra, P., Waddington, G., & Serpell, B. G. (2022). Factors influencing team performance: What can support teams in high-performance sport learn from other industries? A systematic scoping review. *Sports Medicine—Open*, 8(1), 25.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40798-021-00406-7>
- Salter, J. M., Swanwick, R. A., & Pearson, S. E. (2017). Collaborative working practices in inclusive mainstream deaf education settings: teaching assistant perspectives. *Deafness & Education International*, 19(1), 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14643154.2017.1301693>
- Sandelowski, M. (2004). *Using qualitative research*. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(10), 1366–1386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732304269672>
- Santopietro, G., Fancello, V., Fancello, G., Bianchini, C., Pelucchi, S., & Ciorba, A. (2024). Cochlear implantation in children affected by single-sided deafness: a comprehensive review. *Audiol. Res.*, 14(1), 77–85. <https://doi.org/10.3390/audiolres14010007>

- Schafer, E. C., & Thibodeau, L. M. (2006). Speech recognition performance of children using FM systems and remote microphone technology. *Journal of Educational Audiology*, 13, 31–39.
- Scherer, N. (2023). Communication, inclusion and psychological wellbeing among deaf and hard of hearing children: a qualitative study in the Gaza strip. *Plos Global Public Health*, 3(6), e0001635. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0001635>
- Scott, J. A., & Hoffmeister, R. J. (2017). American Sign Language and academic English: factors influencing the reading of bilingual secondary school deaf and hard of hearing students. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 22(1), 59–71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enw065>
- Seal, B. C. (2004). *Best practices in educational interpreting* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Secora, K., & Shahan, C. L. (2023). Teaching collaborative practices: a scoping review of preservice interprofessional education with a focus on preservice speech-language pathologists and preservice teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 8(3), 492–518. https://doi.org/10.1044/2023_PERSP-22-00141
- Shaver, D. M., Marschark, M., Newman, L., & Marder, C., (2014). Who is where? Characteristics of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in regular and special schools. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 19(2), 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/ent056>
- Shaw, S., & Roberson, L. (2009). *Service learning: An opportunity to enhance interpreter preparation*. *Journal of Interpretation*, 19(1).

- Schick, B. (2007). The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA): A tool for supporting best practices. *Odyssey: New Directions in Deaf Education*, 8, 40–45.
- Shroyer, E. H., & Compton, M. V. (1994). Educational interpreting and teacher preparation: An interdisciplinary model. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 139(5), 472–479.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.1994.0005>
- Singleton, J. L., & Newport, E. L. (2004). When learners surpass their models: The acquisition of American Sign Language from inconsistent input. *Cognitive Psychology*, 49(4), 370–407.
- Singleton, J. L., & Tittle, M. D. (2000). Deaf parents and their hearing children. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 5(3), 221–236.
- Silva, K. S. X., & de Oliveira, I. M. (2016). The work of the Brazilian sign language interpreter at school: A case study. *Educação & Realidade, Porto Alegre*, 41(3), 695–712,
<https://www.scielo.br/j/edreal/a/zNcKDXPg9V6VPScRqCb7XR/?format=pdf&lang=en>
- Silvestri, J. A., & Hartman, M. C. (2022). Inclusion and deaf and hard of hearing students: Finding asylum in the LRE. *Education Sciences*, 12(11), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12110773>
- Simpson, A., & Mayer, C. (2023). Early intervention and hearing technologies: Supporting spoken language outcomes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. *Deafness & Education International*, 25(1), 34–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14643154.2023.2183154>
- Smietanski, R. (2016). *Secondary educational interpreters: Role ambiguity and role strain*. Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Secondary-Educational-Interpreters%3A-Role-Ambiguity-Smietanski/7c7606982f58d51d912c7a6281cfdc09c04663f8>

- Smith, D. H., & Ramsey, C. L. (2004). Classroom discourse practices of a Deaf teacher using American Sign Language. *Sign Language Studies*, 5(1), 39–62.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2004.0026>
- Smith, M. B., & Ramsey, C. (2010). *More Than Meets the Eye: Revealing the Complexities of K–12 Interpreting*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California San Diego.
- Smith, K. R., Wolbers, K. A., & Cihak, D. F. (2015). Effects of Language Intervention versus Traditional Interpretation for a Deaf Preschool Child: A Pilot Study. *Journal of Communication Disorders, Deaf Studies & Hearing Aids*, 3(4), 1000141.
<https://doi.org/10.4172/2375-4427.1000141>
- Soman, U., & Nevins, M. E. (2018). Listening and spoken language approaches for children with hearing loss. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of deaf studies in language and education* (Vol. 2, pp. 166–176). Oxford University Press.
- Spencer, P. E., & Marschark, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Evidence-based practice in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students*. Oxford University Press.
- Stamp, R., Novogrodsky, R., & Shaban-Rabah, S. (2021). Argument omissions by deaf students in three languages and three modalities. *First Language*, 41(5), 646–670.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01427237211016200>
- Starr, L. J. (2010). *The use of autoethnography in educational research: Locating who we are in what we do*. Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Use-of-Autoethnography-in-Educational-Research%3A-Starr/3d058f7b19cd7f3a8cca4b09d563798eeb6ede7c>

- Stewart, D. A., Schein, J. D., & Cartwright, B. E. (1998). *Sign language interpreting: Exploring its art and science*. Allyn and Bacon
- Stinson, M. S., & Antia, S. D. (1999). Considerations in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students in inclusive settings. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 4(3), 163–175. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/4.3.163>
- Stinson M. S., & Kluwin T. N. (2003). Educational consequences of alternative school placements. In M. Marschark & P. E. Spencer (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of deaf studies, language, and education* (pp. 52–64). Oxford University Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. SAGE Publications.
- Sutton, P. S., & Shouse, A. W. (2016). Building a culture of collaboration in schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97(7), 69–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721716641653>
- Swanwick, R. (2015). Deaf children's bimodal bilingualism and education. *Language Teaching*, 49(1), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444815000348>
- Tarricone, P. & Luca, J. (2002, July 7–10). Successful teamwork: A case study [Research paper]. *Quality Conversations, Proceedings of the 25th HERDSA Annual Conference*, Perth, Western Australia.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5007&context=ecuworks>
- Terry, J., & Rance, J. (2023). Systems that support hearing families with deaf children: A scoping review. *PLoS One*, 18(11), e0288771.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0288771>

- Theunissen, S. C. P. M., Rieffe, C., Kouwenberg, M., Soede, W., Briaire, J. J., & Frijns, J. H. M. (2014). *Depression in hearing-impaired children. International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology*, 78(2), 294–299. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijporl.2013.11.026>
- Tichenor, M., & Tichenor, J. (2019). Collaboration in the elementary school: What do teachers think? *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 8(2), 54. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v8n2p54>
- Tomaszewski, P., Krzysztofiak, P., Morford, J., & Eźlakowski, W. (2022). Effects of age-of-acquisition on proficiency in polish sign language: insights to the critical period hypothesis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.896339>
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384–399. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022100>
- Tuckman, B. W. (1984). *Conducting educational research* (2nd ed.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Tuckman, B. W., & Jensen, M. A. C. (1977). Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group & Organization Studies*, 2(4), 419–427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105960117700200404>
- Tuckman, B. W. (2003). *The effect of learning and motivation strategies training on college students' achievement. Journal of College Student Development*, 44(3), 430–437. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2003.0034>
- Tufar, I., & Andronic, G. (2020). Sign Language Interpreting in an Educational Context—A Theoretical and Practical Perspective. *Revista Română de Terapia Tulburărilor de Limbaj și Comunicare*. <https://doi.org/10.26744/rrttlc.2020.6.2.07>
- Valente, J. M., & Boldt, G. (2016). *The curious case of the Deaf and contested landscapes of bilingual education. Equity & Excellence in Education*, 49(3), 336–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2016.1194101>

- Vangrieken, K., Meredith, C., Packer, T., & Kyndt, E. (2017). Teacher communities as a context for professional development: A systematic review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 61, 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.001>
- Vaughn, S. (2003, December). *How many tiers are needed for response to intervention to achieve acceptable prevention outcomes* [Conference presentation]. National Research Center on Learning Disabilities Responsiveness-to-Intervention Symposium, Kansas City, Missouri.
- Veyvoda, M. A., Kretschmer, R., & Wang, Y. (2019). Speech-Language clinicians working with deaf children: A qualitative study in context. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 24(3), 289–306. <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enz008>
- Vlcek, S., & Somerton, M. (2023). Collaborative engagement between stakeholders in the education of Australian students with disability: a scoping review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(14), 3357–3374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2216693>
- Wadensjö, C. (2017). Dialogue interpreting and the distribution of responsibility. *HERMES - Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, 8(14), 111–129. <https://doi.org/10.7146/hjlc.v8i14.25098>
- Wainscott, S. D., & Spurgin, K. (2024). Differentiating language for students who are deaf or hard of hearing: A practice-informed framework for auditory and visual supports. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 55(2), 473–494. https://doi.org/10.1044/2023_LSHSS-22-00088
- Wall, S. (2008). Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(1), 38–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700103>

- Weddle, H., Lockton, M., & Datnow, A. (2020). *Teacher collaboration in school improvement*. Oxford Bibliographies Online. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756810-0248>
- Wei, S., Liu, S., & Sha, J. (2020). The development of group work research: A review based on Tuckman's model of group development. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 565. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00565>
- Weiss, M. P., Pellegrino, A., & Brigham, F. J. (2017). Practicing collaboration in teacher preparation: Effects of learning by doing together. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 40*(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406416655457>
- Wheelan, S. A., & Kesselring, J. (2005). Link between faculty group: Development and elementary student performance on standardized tests. *The Journal of Educational Research, 98*(6), 323–330. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.98.6.323-330>
- Wiedebusch, S., Maykus, S., Gausmann, N., & Franek, M. (2020). Interprofessional collaboration and school support in inclusive primary schools in Germany. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 37*(1), 118–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1853971>
- Wolters, N., Knoors, H., Cillessen, A. H., & Verhoeven, L. (2012). *Behavioral, personality, and communicative predictors of acceptance and popularity in early adolescence*. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 32*(4), 585–607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431611403488>

Appendix A: Teacher of the Deaf Job Description

Teacher of the Deaf - Autoethnographic Researcher

Position Overview:

Utilizing the job description for the current employer, the TOD position is responsible for working collaboratively to provide individualized and specialized programming and instruction through the IEP process that impacts student achievement to allow all students to develop to their fullest potential.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required, specialization in deaf hard of hearing preferred
- Classroom experience preferred
- Knowledge of the language and communication needs of students who are Deaf or

Hard of Hearing preferred

- Proficiency in sign language preferred

Certifications:

The TOD candidate must obtain a state teaching certificate in Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Meets and instructs assigned students in the locations and at the times designated by scheduling services

- Implements District Name and Partner District's educational philosophy through use of evidence based instructional practices for planning, implementing and evaluating learning and goal attainment

- Seeks out and grows through professional learning in specialized instruction, special education process, equity, and professional competence

- Creates an environment that is appropriate to the individualized needs of the student and optimizes learning

- Establishes and communicates clear objectives for lessons, units, and projects to students, families, and staff

- Shows evidence of lesson planning and other written evidence of program preparation

- Encourages students to set and maintain appropriate standards and goals for behavior and academic performance

- Administers, interprets, and records standardized tests and progress monitoring

- Employs a variety of high leverage practices and instructional strategies for special education ● Attends staff meetings and serves on staff committees as requested

- Orders and maintains materials necessary for instruction, and trains support staff in their use

- Regularly assesses and evaluates the progress of students through formative and summative assessments, data analysis, observations, and other data collection methods and provides reports as required

- May assist assigned students in such physical tasks as putting on and taking off outerwear, moving from room to room, using the lavatory, lunch, snack, clean up, wash up, and toilet routines, etc

- Utilizes learning aids, including multi-media and technology resources
- Prepares for and facilitates IEP meetings
- Within reason, when required or requested, makes self available to students and families outside the instructional day for education-related purposes
- In cooperation with the principal and/or SPED coordinator, plans, and manages the day-to-day work of assigned teacher assistants and/or aides
- Meets and collaborates with the educational team (families, administrators, teachers, counselors, support personnel) to discuss individual programs to be designed for children who will receive instruction and develops the special education program
- Partners with families of students receiving services to ensure understanding of the services and supports to assist the student in achieving goals and outcomes
- Provides continuous support and information to educational team members to better support students
- Completes individual educational plans (IEP) in a timely manner
- Maintains complete records as required by law, district policy, and administrative regulation
- Acts as a member of a team to screen, evaluate disabilities, attend conferences, and submit written reports of assessment result
- Assists the administration in implementing District rules and policies on student conduct, develops classroom universal on behavior and procedures, and maintains classroom management
- Takes reasonable and necessary precautions to protect students, equipment, materials, and facilities
- Maintains ethical behavior and confidentiality of student information.

- Performs other duties and responsibilities as assigned

Essential Functions:

The requirements described below represent the essential functions of this position.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

Communication Skills

- Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions, and policy and procedure manuals.
- Ability to write routine reports and correspondence.
- Ability to communicate effectively one-on-one and before groups.

Mathematical Skills

- Ability to collect and graph skill programming and behavior data, add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, decimals, and percentages.

Reasoning Skills

- Ability to problem-solve and apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written and/or oral diagram form.
- Ability to effectively organize and prioritize tasks.

Technical Skills

- The ability to interact with a variety of technology platforms.

Physical Requirements

While performing the duties and responsibilities of this job, the employee is regularly required to: talk and hear, stand, move and walk at a brisk pace, sit, and use hands and arms to handle, feel and reach. The position requires the ability to accompany students anywhere on school premises. The employee is occasionally required to stoop or kneel and occasionally lift and move up to 50 pounds. Additionally, the employee must be physically able to implement all Board of Education policies, District procedures, and to perform nonviolent crisis intervention training and techniques. The employee must be physically able to react and intervene quickly during crisis situations, such as but not limited to the following circumstances: student elopement, physical altercations involving students, or any situation that requires physical intervention to maintain student safety. Yearly NCI training with participation in physical intervention strategies is a requirement for the job.

Teachers—District teachers work with students in a variety of settings. Special education teachers may work with students who are enrolled in general education classrooms for most of the school day yet require special education instruction in specific areas. They provide academic instruction and collaborate with the general education staff to facilitate the inclusion of students into the general education setting throughout the day. Other special education teachers may work with students who receive most of their instruction in a special education classroom within one of the 22 partner school districts, or with students who attend one of the district's special education schools. Whereas itinerant teachers usually travel between schools and work with students with disabilities enrolled in general education classrooms. Some itinerant teachers specialize in working with students with vision, hearing, or physical disabilities.

Appendix B: Educational Interpreter Job Description

Position Overview:

District's educational interpreters are committed to providing an educational program that supports and empowers students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential. As an educational interpreter, you will champion our mission by ensuring all students with hearing loss/deafness have access to both general and special education by interpreting and/or transliterating for students throughout the county. Your efforts will help equalize educational access to communication by meeting the cultural and linguistics needs of each student.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Provides visual communication access

- Prepares for assignments by reviewing notes and syllabi, previewing films, videos or texts, and meeting with presenters, faculty, tutors or students
- Provides culture-specific information and adapts interpretations/transliteration to facilitate communication between hearing and deaf persons

Communicates with educational team in support of team goals and the provision of services

- Demonstrates effective professional relationships with students, teachers, parents, and peers and facilitates resolution of support service concerns as a multidisciplinary education team
- Collaborates with the Teacher of the Deaf to provide information for faculty, staff and students regarding (1) interpretation, (2) communication between deaf and hearing people, and (3) deafness

- Represents daily the mission of District
 - Attends staff meeting and networks with other staff members to maintain the flow of information critical to quality service (This includes checking voicemail and email daily)
 - Provides clarification of the interpreter's role to all stakeholders
 - Participates in IEPs by providing the Interpreter Feedback Form and attending as needed, if appropriately determined by the case manager and/or Special Education Coordinator
 - Maintains ethical behavior and confidentiality of information about students within the parameters as required by law for Mandated Reporting and participation with the IEP Team
 - Follows supervisory chain of command as applicable to the situation
- Demonstrates professional development
- Maintains interpreting skills as outlined by the state Interpreter Certification System (MICS)
 - Develops specialized content expertise appropriate for current assignment
 - Enhances interpersonal communication skills
 - Participates in department specific workshops, in-service training, and district provided trainings
 - Maintains and renews certification and license requirements on an annual basis within required timelines
 - Performs other duties within the guidelines of ethical conduct as assigned
- Qualifications

Education and Experience

- Associates Degree required
- Demonstration of interpreting and transliterating skills (sign-to-voice and voice-to-sign) and proficiency in using the English language required
- Knowledge of the role of an educational interpreter within the educational team required
- Awareness of deaf culture, sign language systems and American Sign Language required

Certificates, Licenses, Registrations

- Maintain current Missouri Interpreter Certification at the Basic, Advanced, or Master level required
- Maintain current licensure through the State Committee of Interpreters
- Missouri Interpreter Licensure and Certification at the Master, Advanced or Basic level required

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES

Communication Skills

Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions, and policy and procedure manuals. Ability to write routine reports and correspondence. Ability to communicate effectively one-on-one and before groups.

Mathematical Skills

Ability to collect and graph skill programming and behavior data, add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, decimals,

and percentages.

Reasoning Ability

Ability to problem-solve and apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written and/or oral diagram form.

Physical Requirements

While performing the duties and responsibilities of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk and hear, stand, move and walk at a brisk pace, sit, and use hands and arms to handle, feel and reach. The position requires the ability to accompany students anywhere on school premises. The employee is occasionally required to stoop or kneel and occasionally lift and move up to 50 pounds. Additionally, the employee must be physically able to implement all Board of Education Policies, District procedures, and to perform Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training and techniques. The employee must be physically able to react and intervene quickly during crisis situations, such as but not limited to the following circumstances: student elopement, physical altercations involving students, or any situation that requires physical intervention to maintain student safety. Yearly NCI training with participation in physical intervention strategies is a requirement for the job.

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this job description is not an exhaustive list of the duties performed for this position. Additional duties are performed by the individuals currently holding this position and additional duties may be assigned.

Interpreter Checklist of Expectations

Rationale:

The goal is to ensure that the interpreter understands the structures and systems in place to meet the expectations of the district as a whole. This evaluation tool is intended to facilitate growth and professional development. The checklist criteria was developed by a committee to integrate concepts from The National Association for Interpreters in Education (NAIE).

“Stakeholder” includes students, staff, and parents.

1. Respect Diversity (GBCB - Staff Conduct #1, #2)

- a. ☐ Demonstrate respect for diversity of abilities, cultures, language preferences.

(1.1)

- b. ☐ Implement best practices for inclusive environments. (1, 2.2)

- c. ☐ Active planning to employ best practices using information from IEP, ASLA data, etc. (1.3, 3.4, 4.3)

2. Promote Inclusive Learning Environments (GBCB - #1, #2, #4, #8, #12)

- a. ☐ Promote choice-making, voice and self-advocacy of DHH stakeholders. (2.1)

- b. ☐ Support safe and equitable learning environments for all students. (2.2, 5)

- i. ☐ Complete all mandated District and Partner District professional learning (Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®, ABA, SafeSchool, etc.) and provide the appropriate release time.

- ii. ☐ Know and follow reporting procedure expectations for any staff or student safety concern.

- iii. ☐ Know and follow reporting procedure expectations when an employee witnesses any inappropriate physical intervention .

iv. ☐ Know and follow Hotline Procedures and District's expectation for Mandated Reporters.

c. ☐ Facilitate DHH stakeholder independence with fading in/out prompts in alignment with individual needs. (2.3)

d. ☐ Follow instructional team plan to aid in development of academic and social skills (2.4)

e. ☐ Maintain confidentiality. (2.5)

f. ☐ Model appropriate communications between DHH stakeholder and others. (2.6)

3. Proficiency in Curricular Content

a. ☐ Demonstrate proficiency in ASL educational terminology in content areas related to academics, work and life skills.(3.1)

b. ☐ Provide appropriate levels of support in academic and socio-emotional needs.(3.2)

c. ☐ Contribute observations relating to academic, social and access-related issues to instructional team. (3.3)

d. ☐ Ability to be responsive to problem-solving and flexibility in one's interpretation. (3.4 5.1, 5.4, 5.8)

e. ☐ Ability to interpret in wide range of settings. (3.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.9)

4. Planning and Skill Development (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #12, #15; GBCBC and GBCBC-R)

a. ☐ Follow schedules and written plans. (4.1)

- b. ☐ Prepare and review academic content materials and ASL vocabulary during plan time.(4.2, 4.3, 3.1, 5.9)
 - c. ☐ Develop skill set utilizing resources both on-line and in-person. (4.3, 4.2, 3.1, 5.9)
- 5. Professional Learning and Ethical Practices(GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #12, #15; GBCBC and GBCBC-R, GBH and GBH-R)
 - a. ☐ Exhibit flexibility to workplace changes with schedules, environments and absences/extra duties. (5.1, 5.3, 5.4)
 - b. ☐ Adhere to Board Policies. (5)
 - c. ☐ Demonstrate dependability with regular attendance. (5.3, 4.1)
 - i. ☐ Know and follow attendance/tardiness policies, procedures and expectations.
 - ii. ☐ Know and follow building-specific absence procedures.
 - iii. ☐ Know and use WorkForce Management (WFM) guidelines and expectations for clocking in on site.
 - iv. ☐ Know and follow partner district policies and procedures for attendance.
 - d. ☐ Collaboration with school building by participating in meetings and in-services. (5.4)
 - e. ☐ Respect role differences of Teacher of the Deaf, Paraprofessional, Interpreter and other professionals of the instructional team. (5.5)
 - f. ☐ Maintain professional relationships with colleagues and students per Board Policy GBCB. (5.6)

- g. ☐ Communicate effectively with colleagues and students within scope of Board Policy GBCB. (5.7)
- i. ☐ Know and follow expectations of all employee's responsibility for checking District and Partner District email on a consistent basis.
 - ii. ☐ Know and follow building-specific written communication systems (email where available)
- h. ☐ Apply feedback/reflections from colleagues, teachers, administrators and DHH stakeholder. (5.8)
- i. ☐ Seek out and complete professional development opportunities.

Interpreter Code of Ethics

In your work as an educational interpreter, you may face situations where the interests of a student, the school, or your own may conflict. Understanding and practicing ethical standards will help you to:

- Become aware of the correct course of action regarding a variety of perspectives other than just your own,
- Consider the implications of the decisions that you make ,
- Consider the potential impact of those decisions on students and other school staff.

Ethics are particularly important within the educational setting because staff are placed in a position of authority over students. Students are often vulnerable and have limited influence, relying on staff and parents to protect their best interests. It is necessary to be as fully prepared

as possible to function ethically as well as legally, in the school environment. Ethical standards provide a framework of reflection on appropriate behavior.

As an integral part of the educational team, you have a commitment to uphold ethical standards of behavior in your relationships with students, parents, and staff. Staff members should act responsibly to ensure that the best interests of individual students are met. As an employee of the district, you must be prepared to provide support as aligned with the ethical tenets below. Additionally, as a state licensed Related Service Provider, you have a legal obligation to comply with all state laws governing the practice of Interpreting.

General Ethical Considerations for District Staff

Instructional Support Considerations

- Follow directions provided by your supervisor, as they are ultimately responsible for the instruction and behavior management of students.
- Ensure data collection is accurate.
- Maintain student confidentiality and do not post information about students using social media.
- Follow Board policies and building procedures.

Relationship with Students and Families

- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff.
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's handicap, race, sex, cultural background, or religion.

- Use behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards established by the local school district and classroom teacher.
- Present yourself as a positive adult role model.
- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
- Refer concerns expressed by families, students, or others to their teacher/ supervisor.
- Only discuss school programs and confidential matters with appropriate personnel, and when students are not present.

Relationship with Teacher and Related Service Providers

- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher(s).
- Express differences of opinion only when students are not present.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher, related service providers or teaching methods/support programming directly with the personnel responsible for the plan.
 - If issues specific to the related service providers and/or teachers and the approaches used were not resolved at the teacher-level, then discuss concerns only with the teacher's supervisor.
- Do not discuss teacher or related service provider problems with students, other teacher-level staff, paraprofessionals, or students' families.
- Follow the behavior management approach as established by the teacher.

Relationship with the District

- Commit to improving your skills.

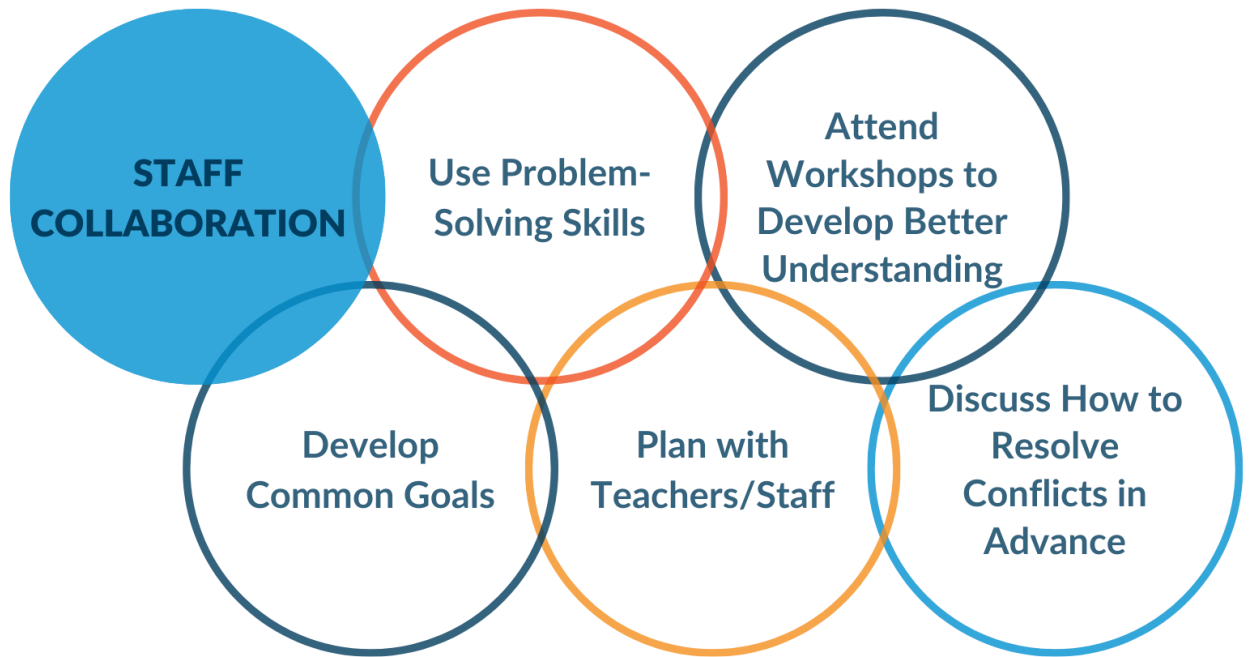
- Become familiar with and follow District policies and procedures.
- Represent the District and its programs in a positive manner.
- When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the grievance procedure outlined in Board policies.

Collaborative Relationships

Collaboration in an educational environment is typically an ongoing process whereby staff with different areas of expertise voluntarily work together to create solutions to problems that are impeding students' success, as well as carefully monitoring and refining those solutions.

Central to these relationships are the following beliefs:

- Collaborative relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect, and open communication
- All participants, students, families, and staff in the collaborative relationship must have equal status
- All staff can learn better ways to teach and interact with all students
- Student achievement improves when staff and families work together rather than in isolation



Appendix C: 2024-2025 Educational Interpreter Asynchronous Professional Development Modules

Course Overview

This course will hold 12 Modules. These Modules are the asynchronous learning opportunities for the November 3rd, 2024-November 2nd, 2025 MICS Interpreter Cycle. The topics covered will fall into the categories of Deaf Culture/Community, Social Justice, Skills Based Growth, and Education.

Module One: No Ordinary Hero: The Super Deafy Movie

You will watch the movie “No Ordinary Hero: Super Deafy Movie” and reflect on the cultural achievements and struggles that are depicted throughout the video. You will then answer 16 short answer questions that deal with culture, community, discrimination, and oppression. Emphasis will also be given to the character of Jacob and his educational experience.

Module Two: Deaf Adopted Children and the Educational Impact of Trauma and Attachment Issues

This is a 3 part webinar series titled “Deaf Adopted Children and the Educational Impact of Trauma and Attachment Issues”.

*Part 1 will provide an overview of types of adoption, to include international and domestic, interracial, foster and special needs.

*Part 2 will address trauma and neglect and the impact on the brain in Deaf children who have been adopted.

*Part 3 will address grief and loss and attachment issues and its' impact on the education of Deaf children.

Module Three: BBC Birth of a Language

Interpreters often spend a lot of time studying ASL, but rarely devote as much time to studying English. It is easy for native speakers to dismiss or not realize the difficulties of English. After Mandarin Chinese, English is the second most difficult language to learn. Understanding the origins and history of English will give a broader framework when reflecting on the nuances of it's usage and why it is often so difficult for nonnative speakers to learn. You will watch The Adventure of English BBC documentary "Birth of a Language" and reflect on the development of the English language as presented in the video. You will answer 15 questions that deal with the origins of English, vocabulary, grammar structure, and English Literature.

Module Four | BBC English in America

This Module can be considered a Part 2 to Module 3, but can be done as a stand alone activity. Interpreters often spend a lot of time studying ASL, but rarely devote as much time to studying English. It is easy for native speakers to dismiss or not realize the difficulties of English. After Mandarin Chinese, English is the second most difficult language to learn. You will watch The Adventure of English BBC documentary "English in America" and reflect on the usage and development of the English language in America as presented in the video. You will answer 17 questions that deal with the influence of native languages on English, European perspectives of American English, the evolution of American English, American idioms, English and slavery, and American English and Literature.

Module Five | Deaf Musicality and Unearthing the Translation Process

This is a 3 Part activity. All parts must be completed.

Part 1: You will view the webinar “Deaf Musicality and Unearthing the Translation Process” by Jason Listman, Summer Crider Loeffler, and Rosa Lee Timm. You will then answer 14 comprehension questions from the webinar.

Part 2: You will analyze a deaf performer's work. Six samples will be provided. You will pick one of the six samples to analyze, and will answer 7 questions.

Part 3 You will apply knowledge to your own translation and recording. Pick any song you want to translate. You will submit a recording of yourself signing the song and will answer 10 self analysis questions.

Module Six | Ethics in Education Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline for Deaf Youth

Presentation Description: The presenters will address the causes of the disproportionate representation of deaf youth and adults in the United States criminal and civil legal systems, and present solutions to improving resilience in deaf youth. Case examples of deaf adults who were previously incarcerated will be shared. The audience will leave with clear strategies to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline for deaf youth. You will view the embedded video and write reflection responses, with a focus on your role in Education and your ethical responsibilities. All parts must be completed for full credit and to obtain CEUs.

Module Seven | Cultural Heritage Vignettes

Participants will watch Cultural Heritage Vignettes II and reflect on the ethnic stories presented in the video. Participants will answer 13 questions, one for each story that is shared. Questions will be directly related to content in order to demonstrate an understanding of the signed information.

Module Eight | Autism and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

This webinar will present the following information:

- *Definitions related to Autism
- *Prevalence of Autism in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
- *Complexities of Identification/Diagnosis
- *Steps to Take
- *Classroom Strategies

Participants will answer 10 questions through EdPuzzle.

Module Nine | Mental Health Trauma and the Deaf Child

Presented by Dr. Jon Bergeron, PhD. This webinar addresses trauma and its impact on children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Dr. Bergeron discusses how trauma affects the overall well-being of an individual and provides practical strategies for helping deaf children navigate life after experiencing trauma. This informative session is accessible in English and American Sign Language.

Module Ten | Reading Between the Signs

In *Reading Between the Signs*, Anna Mindess provides a perspective on a culture that is not widely understood-American Deaf culture. With the collaboration of three distinguished Deaf consultants, Mindess explores the implications of cultural differences at the intersection of the Deaf and hearing worlds.

Used in sign language interpreter training programs worldwide, *Reading Between the Signs* is a resource for students, working interpreters and other professionals. This important new

edition retains practical techniques that enable interpreters to effectively communicate their clients' intent, while its timely discussion of the interpreter's role is broadened in a cultural context. New chapter explores the changing landscape of the interpreting field and discusses the concepts of Deafhood and Deaf heart. This examination of using Deaf interpreters pays respect to the profession, details techniques and shows the benefits of collaboration.

The book consists of 14 Chapters. Participants will answer a total of 73 reflection questions, with some coming from each of the 14 chapters.

Module Eleven | Deaf Eyes on Interpreting

As the ASL-English interpreting field has become professionalized, there is a growing disconnect between interpreters and the Deaf consumers they serve. Whereas interpreting used to be a community-based practice, the field is growing into a research-based profession that begins in a classroom rather than in the Deaf community. Despite the many gains being made in the interpreting services profession, with an emphasis on the accuracy of the interpreted work, the perspectives of Deaf individuals are rarely documented in the literature. Opportunities for enhanced participation and full inclusion need to be considered in order for Deaf people to best represent themselves to the hearing, nonsigning public as competent and intelligent individuals.

Deaf Eyes on Interpreting brings Deaf people to the forefront of the discussions about what constitutes quality interpreting services. The contributors are all Deaf professionals who use interpreters on a regular basis, and their insights and recommendations are based on research as well as on personal experiences. These multiple perspectives reveal strategies to maximize

access to interpreted work and hearing environments and to facilitate trust and understanding between interpreters and Deaf consumers. Interpreter educators, interpreting students, professional interpreters, and Deaf individuals will all benefit from the approaches offered in this collection.

The book is divided into 4 sections. Participants will answer a total of 21 reflection questions, some from each section of the book.

Module Twelve: Deaf Learners (TODs/Paras)

There is no one-size-fits-all teaching and learning approach for students. Variability matters, not only among all learners, but within the community of deaf learners.

In this edWebinar (2020), we discuss a broad range of questions often asked by many teachers, including: How can I motivate and engage deaf learners, especially those with different cultural, language, and low socio-economic status? How can I better understand and address in classroom practice the diverse language and cultural needs of my deaf students? And, as a teacher, how can I work with families to meet the needs of deaf students in a digital environment?

This conversation focuses on educational equity, including critical curricula, critical consciousness, and compassionate practices among teachers and students with multiple intersecting identities. We explore ways to provide support for deaf students with different

background experiences, cultures, and languages. And, we dig into the research behind learner variability that has an impact on the teaching of and learning by deaf students.

During this edWebinar, we also:

Discuss ideas to improve professional development for teachers working with deaf students that seek to elevate strengths rather than lead with deficits

Provide guidance on how to choose appropriate resources

Offer ideas on how to partner with parents that are mindful of culture

Encourage and nurture student identity, including the intersectionality of deafness and race

This recorded edWebinar will be of interest to preK-12 teachers, especially those who teach English language learners, librarians, and school and district leaders. Participants will be expected to answer 10 comprehension/reflection questions.

Presented by Melissa Herzig, Ed.D., Director of the Translation in the Science of Learning Lab and Assistant Director for the Ph.D. in Educational Neuroscience program at Gallaudet University; Andrea Sonnier, Creator of Critical Consciousness School and doctoral candidate in Critical Studies in the Education of Deaf Learners Ph.D. Program at Gallaudet University; and SaraBeth Sullivan, Fourth year doctoral candidate in the Educational Neuroscience Ph.D. program at Gallaudet University in Dr. Berteletti's Numeracy and Educational Neuroscience Lab.

Hosted by Barbara A. Pape, Policy and Communications Director, Learner Variability
Project, Digital Promise

This activity is in the category of Education and is not a CEU Activity.

Appendix D: March 3, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

Today is March 3rd, 1:08 p.m. And today, I led a lesson for 3rd hour science class, with 100% attendance. And I feel like overall the lesson went pretty well. On Mondays, for the most part, we have eight period days, so the classes are shorter. Instead of 80 minutes, they're closer to 60 minutes.

So, when I first got to school and came into class, I had a few minutes to look over my lesson plans, become acquainted or reacquainted with the information I was teaching. When the interpreters came in and they came in right before the bell, one interpreter sat, at the front and the other interpreter sat in the back, and I kinda left it up to them to determine who starts interpreting, what that might look like in hopes that, you know, that supports a little bit of autonomy without assigning per se an interpreter, but knowing, that they are specialists in their field and they can determine who starts as long as their services are being met. As students were starting with their procedures, they were copying their planners when I kinda met with the interpreters to talk about the lesson. Before I was emailing them lesson plans, I just felt when I could do that, I enjoy doing that, but I also feel like time is such a restraint or constraint and being able to share lesson plans because I don't know how to write or it's really challenging to write lesson plans long term because I don't know how fast the students will acquire the skill and the language due to their language deprivation.

So, I quickly previewed the lesson. I essentially just went over the agenda, and so I just read it to them. I said, We'll do our procedures, our class jobs. We'll review vocabulary, which were, like, three words, digestive system, mouth, organs, oh, and saliva. And then we were going to split up into stations.

It took a little bit for class to get started, but as we got to Number 2 of our agenda point, the student with the job for calendar went up to, the calendar, and it seems that we have a routine going. The student doesn't utilize their voice and looked at the interpreter. I initially said so and so [student name], you need to confer with your interpreter, really emphasizing that partnership, and the interpreter informed me that, the student did that independently this time. So, it's something we've been working on for a while, but the student, asked them to come to the calendar and another student held the DM, which is that assistive listening device, and the other student, handed the DM to the same interpreter. So, I thought that was really good.

One thing I noticed I'm struggling with is when to sign and when not to sign. Direct communication is really really important to me, and there were times that I was standing at the, teacher desk, the standing teacher desk and the interpreter, And the students were at the calendar across the room, and the students would look at me to answer a question, and I would start signing, but I wouldn't voice "I'm about to sign." So, then the interpreter was still looking at the students and not, at me. So, they weren't able to voice. So, I felt like I could do a better job at kind of talking with the interpreters beforehand, like, maybe asking the interpreter who sat in the back to voice for me when I am signing, but also voicing out loud to the interpreter at the calendar to let them know, that I'm gonna be signing just because there seem to be confusion.

And the students who work with me know to look at me, but it's not super reasonable for me to expect the interpreter to be looking at the full scope. So, five students, me, that just seems to be a lot. I also noticed that when the students return from calendar to their seats and I was at my standing desk, I started talking before the interpreter could even make their way back. So, they were kinda jogging back, and I felt a little bad. So maybe I could just kinda, you know, take

a second and make sure that everyone is set up before I'm starting that lesson just to make sure the interpreter is settled and in that right mindset of switching from calendar to now content.

We then went to our vocabulary, the interpreters had actually given me feedback that they feel like the note cards were more effective than notebooks. So, we have the students make their own note cards, the vocabulary that we taught last week. So, they wrote the words on one side with a picture, and then when you flip it, it had the definition, which was simplified. And I have the students copy highlighting specific words. So, for example, for digestive system, when they flip it back, it says, turns food into energy, and it may have had extra words like a system that helps turn food into energy, they would highlight food energy knowing those are the main parts.

It goes from food to energy. And so when I gave the students a few minutes to review their vocabulary, I did assign interpreters at that time. I didn't determine, you know, who would work with who. It just seemed that we had two students who use ASL. So, I just asked one interpreter to match with one and the other interpreter to match with the other, and just have them fingerspell ask them to fingerspell and review those words.

So, showing the English sentence and how that would be shown in ASL. And we did that for about 3 minutes. And then we had our students go into stations. So, our students who use listening spoken language sat at the u-table and worked on fluency and articulation and our kids that used ASL, we actually had an Edpuzzle created by our interpreter effective practice specialist who signed all the parts of the digestive system. And I asked ASL Interpreter 1 last week to do a voice over so that it would be accessible for all students.

So, we're having that high rigor for everyone. But for today, we just have the students who use ASL focus on the video. I found that the students are really struggling to pay attention or at least one was really struggling to pay attention. And I gave that student an option to work with interpreter one, and they had declined. So, the interpreter was sitting at the front, of the classroom while the other interpreter was Interpreter 2 was also waiting for the student to ask for help.

When the student was getting several answers wrong that I felt like were not due to comprehension, I did ask ASL Interpreter 1 to sit closer to the student and offer support when questions came up on the screen to interpret it from English to ASL to make sure we're assessing content knowledge and not their English acquisition. That took a little bit longer than I had anticipated. The other student rewatched it a couple times. We did not finish, all of our agenda points. So we finished out of seven agenda points, which were procedures, class jobs, review, vocab, stations, introduce new vocab, show the organs from the mannequin we have, and then watch a 3D video of the organs that we got to.

So, really, we only got through half our agenda. So, I'm wondering if it would be helpful for me to share the video to the interpreters beforehand. It is captioned, and it's more of a visual, but just knowing what to expect. I shared the Canva presentation ahead of time last week with all the vocabulary words that we're going through. Okay.

And then one thing I think I can also work on is when I'm looking across the room at students, it's like giving them a heads up about who I'm gonna call on next. That way, they can kinda shift their gear and be aware of what my plans are.

Appendix E: March 4, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

Today is March 4th and this is my personal narrative on 3rd hour science.

We had 100% attendance in terms of students during science class.

Interpreter 2 was there the entire time, but Interpreter 1 showed up the last 15 minutes. They had something going on so they came in late.

Before science class, I met with Interpreter 2 to talk about our plans today, explaining that we didn't finish all of our lesson for Monday, so we were going to continue with finishing up station work, introducing new vocabulary, having students go to the mannequin to identify the organs of the digestive system that we've taught, and then watching a video of an individual biting an apple and watching it go through the digestive system until the stomach.

Interpreter 2 asked me before class how I felt about her working with another student one-on-one, how I felt like that dynamic was going because I had been asking Interpreter 1 to be with one student interpreting and Interpreter 2 to be with another student. I told interpreter 2 that I feel like it was going well for the student she was working with, but I was slightly concerned that it was distracting for the other student that has concentrate concentration struggles.

Interpreter 2 had also asked Interpreter 1 about their feelings about the placement, and they had considered potentially that one student with attention struggles sitting in the back but also to determine no matter where that student is sitting with their attention struggles, it would be tough anyway.

Interpreter 2 came into class and sat at the front of the class while I was reviewing my lesson plan notes.

I felt like class was starting pretty quickly. The kids are pretty good about starting their procedures after a couple of prompts 'cuz they get really excited to see each other.

As the students were copying their procedures, which is in their planner, they were waiting for their class jobs.

I forgot to mention before class started, I also told Interpreter 2 I wanted to practice our routines again because Interpreter 1 and [Interpreter] 2 had both come up to me a couple weeks ago, and told me that having note cards for class was really helpful and was more beneficial than having the notebooks. And they felt like when they were working one-on-one with students that the students were concentrating better and recalling that information more quickly. And so, I brought a baggie with note cards on it for the kids to write their own notes on there. But for some students with severe language deprivation, my student teacher wrote guided notes on the card so the students could just identify the missing words.

So, I asked Interpreter 2 to stand outside with me as the students lined up against the wall before they came in, so I could reteach our new procedures. So, as students walked in, instead of just grabbing their planner and sitting down, they would also grab their baggie of note cards. So, we came in and practiced that.

Going back to the students with their procedures, they were copying their planner agenda, Items 1 through 7, the procedures, the class jobs, a quick review of previous vocabulary, then station work, vocabulary, organs (locating the organs on the mannequin), and then the video.

Once students were done copying their agenda, they naturally kind of walked to the calendar. It's really exciting to see a student I've been working with naturally go to the interpreter and say, "Hey, I need you to interpret for me." The student does not use their voice and signed across the room life pointing, "Interpreter come here." Not rude but playful and interpreter too kind of gave them a look like, "Hmm I think you're forgetting something." And

then the student smiled like being jovial and signed, “please.” So the interpreter came over there as the student was going over the calendar. I noticed today that the interpreter as I was at my computer at teacher desk, I was not participating as much in calendar time. So, I noticed Interpreter 2 kind of helped fill in some of those gaps. For example, seemed to give a little bit of corrective feedback to the student in a supportive way, like it wasn’t malicious, but just like, hey, I need you to sign so I can understand and giving feedback that was necessary. I also noticed that Interpreter 2 when I am not as involved in calendar, kind of shifts roles a little bit, to what I would perceive as kind of a para(professional) where Interpreter 2 is kind of, “hold on student (name) this person’s talking,” like giving feedback and I don’t find anything wrong with that. I do get very anxious about how that will be perceived when students go to the high school.

I get really really nervous that um . . . the high school staff will always judge what we’re doing at the middle school. Like we’re overhelping . . . or we’re overdoing this . . . and sometimes that makes me paranoid about how much or how little I’m doing. And at the same time, I’m grappling with these students have language deprivation and need all the help they can get. So, is it really wrong if an interpreter is supporting me in that? If it’s not long-term? I don’t have the answer for that, but I don’t have any issue with the interpreter giving a little bit of feedback. They’re not doing it throughout the class. Like, they seem to be very mindful and when I’m present and active in a lesson, or in a station, they very much allow me to uhh . . . act as what I would describe as that teaching role.

When we were reviewing vocabulary, it was just Interpreter 2, and normally we would have Interpreter 1 and [Interpreter] 2. I had asked Interpreter 2 to sit between two students that sit together normally, and kind of act as a signing model. So, as the students were reviewing, I asked the interpreter to support their fingerspelling, and show those signs, and describe-point to the words on the note cards to make the connection between the sign and the actual written word.

We don’t have a para(professional) in this class at this time, where I would normally ask our signing para(professional) to do that. So, I do often wonder if I’m asking the interpreters too much. I have asked them to please tell me if they feel like I’m asking too much, and that has not happened. At least their feedback they’re giving me is not that, and they almost seem excited to do it, and very happy to do it. But again, I wonder if an interpreter from the high school or another school came in. Part of me wonders if I would not ask them to do that (hesitancy) or be really kind of scared where I feel like I have to walk around the room and differentiate so much that it feels like I’m not even teaching. So, I’m not sure if my behaviors (hesitancy) or my requests would change depending on who’s observing. I’m not sure I would do the same thing if my supervisor was in here. I’m not entirely sure.

I do notice that sometimes when I’m gesturing, I’m wondering if that gets in the way of the Interpreter 2 signing. For example, I was voicing, “take these cards, student name, and pass them out to your peers.” And then Interpreter 2 said, “Are you sure they need two cards per person?” Because two students were getting guided note cards and I was like, “Oh, you’re right they just two students need it,” but when I was just gesturing pass it out that actually is the sign for pass it out and I realized that as I was standing next to Interpreter 2 I’m doing that too and I wonder if that confuses students whereas they think I’m about to sign if I’m not and I’m trying really hard to take turns on when I’m signing and when I’m voicing to show equity to students that I don’t think there’s a hierarchy of language. I want to take turns showing respect to each of their languages.

When Interpreter 2 walked in, they were there the last 15 or 20 minutes of class. They walked in and I explained that students were wrapping up their EdPuzzle. They were watching

our ASL interpreter effective practice specialist on Edpuzzle. They were signing and Interpreter 1 . . . I asked if they would do a voice-over, and they did. So, I was really excited that students really had that full accessibility of our listening spoken language students were able to watch the Edpuzzle and have access with closed captioning, the listening spoken language and the signs. And then, of course, our ASL students had the full access with the captioning and direct communication with ASL.

I noticed that our kids had a harder time focusing because it was 2D viewing, which is more challenging than 3D viewing.

I noticed today that as I was teaching our new vocabulary words, which were esophagus and stomach, Interpreter 2 was at the board with me, and I had a Canva behind me the whole time. So, as I'm teaching, they know what to expect. And there's a picture of a human body that has a Number 1, 2, 3, 4, and shows the nature of how food will progress through the digestive system. It was really fun. So, as anytime, you know, I'm saying a word that I want the interpreter to finger spell, I will ask the interpreter to spell it. So, "please spell stomach" or "I'm going to spell stomach. S-T-O-M-A-C-H." And the interpreter would then finger spell it, knowing that I don't want them to sign the word stomach because I'm looking for that sign expressively. We did have the students go over to the mannequin to pull out the organs that we went over. Then Interpreter 1 got there the last 15 minutes, I noticed that when I voiced, "I'm going to have everyone walk to the mannequin," she naturally stood up and stood right by the mannequin. And as I walked up to her, I asked if she and I could switch, so I was closest to the mannequin, and she was interpreting. I noticed that our interpreters are very aware and very receptive in this class. There's very little I feel like I have to do to get their attention. It almost feels like a dance. I try to voice everything that we're doing in class, so they know what the end goal is, and they know what the next steps are. And I feel like that maximizes instructional time and is a lot less trying to figure out what's going on in class. I do sometimes feel like I have to voice because I'm worried they feel like I don't trust them. And I do trust both of the interpreters a lot. But I feel like if I'm signing I feel like because a lot of interpreters will say that voicing can be more challenging than signing to interpret. I often feel like sometimes I have to voice because, you know, I don't want to step on toes if you will. They've never said that necessarily. But I do know that they are worried about building trust with the students. And so sometimes I feel like I'm putting my needs or my rationale below what I would, you know, normally pick in any other setting. I really like that these interpreters today are very quick to follow directions, or clarify directions. For example, Interpreter 2 when I was another student was asking me a question and I could see from my peripheral another student kind of gave that mouth expression or that facial expression of misunderstanding without me having to reexplain the directions which I normally would prefer to do because I do feel like that is part of the teacher of the deaf's role in the DHH setting if they sign which a lot of interpreters I feel like are not used to that. In this case, I was very much happy with the interpreter filling in. However, normally if it's a full group of instruction, I do actually prefer the student ask me and me responding. And it's not that I don't trust the interpreters. It's just that direct communication is very important to me to show respect. But not just that, it's we know research shows that direct communication yields more positive results on student achievement. And so normally I would like to do that, but because I was helping another student and I noticed that it wasn't a reteaching of a lesson, it was reexplaining the directions first, second, third (points to fingers). That seemed very appropriate and really that line is so ambiguous sometimes about what the interpreter does and what the teacher does. And

there's so much contention in the area in which I live about who should do what and knowing the roles are ambiguous and research is so full with that.

It's nice in my class I feel a little bit more safe and feel a lot less judged by the interpreters I work with. Interpreter 2, like I said, stood by the mannequin, and you know we looked at the mannequin, and I was explaining to Interpreter 1 today that what she missed. So, when she came in here, I did go over everything they had missed from the lesson to catch them up 'cuz I did feel like that was important.

I also shared to Interpreter 1 that Interpreter 2 and I did, what I think, is a cute fun activity as there's a lot of incidental learning and things that come to mind when I'm teaching. I cannot plan for every single thing I'm going to do. Sometimes things just come up naturally that I'm like, "Oh! That's a good idea. I'm going to add this really quick that." I can't possibly think of every strategy or every detail I'm going to do. So, for example, when we got to esophagus, we looked at a picture of a person sign or standing with their profile and it showed the mouth going down to the esophagus. And it hit me. I was like, "OH...we don't teach enough classifiers." We teach word and sign in isolation to this word. But often we don't give students autonomy to use classifiers in the way that are appropriate and play with that language more because they do have language deprivation.

And so last minute I was like, "Oh my gosh, what a great opportunity to see how they would sign it." And so, I went over, I have handshaped cards and I started holding the cards up and I said, "Interpreter 2, let's just see what they come up with." And they were like, "Oh yeah, that's fine." And they kind of sat back and I noticed they were kind of looking at me like, where's she going to go with this? And I didn't have an answer yet. It's more of like, can you just trust me for a second 'cuz I don't know if this will be successful or not. I just want to see where we're at. And so, I showed a handshaped card and I was like, "Does this match the esophagus?" And one student was like, "no." And so, I asked Interpreter 2 if they would put it in their lap and they did. But for the rest of the cards and I don't know why I did that.

I don't know why I gave it to them because I know they're signing. I don't know why I did that. I had a table next to me. I wasn't even thinking about it. But for the rest of the cards, I was flipping a couple, and one came up with the G handshape. And I said, "Would this be appropriate?" And one student was showing yes because we start with our thumb and our pointer finger, to show our throat because it's thin like that. So, the next one we showed more and they kept saying, "no, no, no." And then we got to the O handshape and I said, "What about this one?" And we were kind of like, "Ehh maybe." And I kind of showed that face of, "That's not one I would choose to really show that." But I said, "There's one more." And before I could flip the F hand shape, a student jumped up and said, "This, This, This!" And they showed two F handshapes. One starting from under the chin and the other one going down to show it's going down their chest. And so, it was really exciting.

And I think we were both excited to see that connection. So today was a really good lesson. I think we were all excited that we got through all of our agenda points, which doesn't always happen because of behaviors, but today was a good lesson.

Appendix F: March 6, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

Okay, so today is March 6th and it is an ODD day, and I had a really really great lesson in 3rd hour today. I felt like today was probably one of my more successful lessons since today during class during third hour we started with Interpreter 1 and myself, and I went over the procedures and expectations for class today. I told the Interpreter 1 that we were going to continue following the procedures which was students coming in to copy their planner . . . doing their class job. They were going to get 5 minutes of review on their vocabulary. We were going to do stations, then teach two new vocabulary words, look at the organs on the mannequin, and watch our video and if we had time students to independently complete their Gizmos.

Interpreter 1 came in today and suggested that we move one student. We have two students who use ASL that sit in the very front and Interpreter 1 suggested that one of the students sit behind one of the other students. So, Interpreter 2 could interpret one-on-one for them because of their language deprivation. I was blown away today with the engagement since that move.

All the students were very actively engaged and very focused. After the procedures of students copying their agenda, we had our class jobs, and the student that was moved behind the other student their class job was to do calendar. They went up to the calendar, and they did not ask for an interpreter, which is something we've been working on to ensure equity among all students and working on that theory of mind, meaning considering other people's thoughts. Just because you use ASL does not mean that everyone has access. So, access can mean many different things. But I was really excited to see one of our students who uses LSL (Listening Spoken Language) who never advocates . . . today they said, "Hey where's the interpreter?" and went up to that student and signed "interpreter." And the student just kind of ignored him. And so that student who uses LSL went up to the interpreter, and I was really excited because she asked, "Hey, can you come interpret for me?" Which is a really nice thought because most people think interpreters are only for ASL users. But not only that, what was most exciting was the student who is really resistant to wearing a DM actually connected to the DM and handed the DM to the interpreter, which has not happened at all this year, and they're in sixth grade. So, I was really excited to see that. And I feel like the advocacy and considerations for the environment for everyone has really improved.

During stations or during the review, excuse me, I noticed without me saying anything that Interpreter 1 is really understanding the value of those boundaries. For one student who has pretty significant attention issues, the student laid their head down when they know the expectation and had been explained that for 5 minutes, you get your note cards out and the interpreter is there to help sign the words and support. The student put their head down. Interpreter 1 looked at me and said, "I'm not going sign. I'm not going to do this." And I was like, "You're right. You should not do that." In middle school, your job is not to tap tap get their attention, especially in the deaf classroom because that's more of my role. But I was really excited to see that almost like we were on the same wavelength like we knew what the expectations were. We knew what we've been teaching this whole time. So that was really great.

I also noticed Interpreter 2 today, after they had 5 minutes of review, I called on each student and said they had to raise their hand and they had to wait until the interpreter was done signing before I would call on them, and they could not shout out the answer. I called on a student with pretty severe language deprivation knowing it was going to be a challenge. I said, "What is the first step of the digestive system," knowing it would be the mouth. We put our food

in our mouth and that's what starts. And the student was really struggling and they thought I was trying to make it harder for them. They were thinking I was wanting them to say saliva. So, I said, "No, you're so close. It's before that. What happens before that?" And the student went to reach for their card to read it. And interpreter 2 signed, "No, no, no, you You can! You can!" Like encouraging.

And I just think those are those kind of things that aren't really talked about in interpreter programs. I can only speculate based on my conversations with staff members. But it was something that didn't bother me at all because that IS what I wanted. That interpreter was very responsive to holding high expectations even for students with language deprivation. But that interpreter also does a very good job at checking in with me to make sure from their perspective that they're not overstepping. And I feel like since we've been meeting before class to talk about our plans, we have wasted VERY little instructional time. And today is one of the very few days that we actually got through our entire lesson—bell to bell—and had 5 minutes of extra time at the end. and I was just really pleased with how it went.

I also noticed that when I was standing at the board and presenting my Canva we had gone through mouth, esophagus, stomach, and we had just started the liver and pancreas. The students get their own note card, and they're supposed to write on one side write the new term. So, for example, liver and then underneath that they draw a picture. They essentially are copying the picture I have on the board which is a 2D model. So, very easy to draw and it's all labeled with numbers. I could tell that a student was struggling and before I could say anything, Interpreter 1 legitimately asked me, "Do you mind if I trace this using the Smartboard pen?" And I was like, "Absolutely, that's a great idea." So, she quickly sketched it out. and I noticed that the interpreters are turning their head when I'm signing. They're looking at what I'm signing. They're not signing over me, which feels so nice and makes me feel very respected and trusted as an educator, but also it teaches the students to respect those rules too and recognize that adults can learn from each other and that there is turn taking. So, there was a lot of life skills I feel like that were taught too, and it was just really exciting to see. And then let's see . . . and then when I would go to the mannequin, I would voice like, "Okay, I'm gonna go walk to the mannequin," and the interpreters took turns kind of interpreting what we were going through.

But also, I thought it was a really cool idea. I had one student not know what the word numb meant, n-u-m-b, and I was trying so hard to explain it. The interpreters are trying to explain it. And then one of our other ASL users, who has really grown in their language started explaining to the other student, and then Interpreter 1 said, "Hey, do you mind if we see if that student can sign to the other student?" And I said, "Sure, we can see." And that student signed it. And then that student was like, "OHHH okay!" So, it was a beautiful moment in terms of instruction and making generalizations. And then it was so nice for peer tutoring, which we know is a high-yield strategy anyway in instructional strategies. So, to see that all develop and watch the interpreters look back at me and almost like they were anticipating what I was going to do. And we just got through everything. So today was definitely one of my favorite lessons.

And also Interpreter 2 has a previous background in the medical field. So today, I even mentioned to them I said:

hey I do have a certification in science but that's K through sixth grade. I said so if I say anything that's not totally accurate, please tell me because I don't want to teach them something it's not 100% accurate.

And I just saw the back of her head shake up and down because she was in front of me and she kept interpreting everything I was saying. And then the very last thing that I thought was

a good point is when we were going over the pancreas, the definition said the pancreas is responsible for storing or using sugar. I'm working on studying skills. So, I've been highlighting and underlining the key terms in the definition because I don't want our students to feel overwhelmed. And so, I underlined save, use, and sugar. And Interpreter 2 was like, "Hey, excuse, sorry. Do you think that more might be important because they don't do it at the same time?" And I was like, "You're absolutely right." So, I circled and just explained that the pancreas can do either. So, today was just really exciting to get through everything. The student engagement was more than I'd ever seen. Even the most reluctant student who has language deprivation was really engaged and previously did not like having a one-on-one interpreter, which is not something I have really ever seen, but I do see it very beneficial for students who have almost no language. So, today was just a really great lesson and I'm really excited to hear from the interpreters tomorrow.

Appendix G: March 10, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

Today is March 10th, and I just finished 3rd hour science with both interpreters. This is Week 2 of our research. Today's lesson went really well. However, we did have . . . let's see . . . one student was absent. So, we really had one ASL student today. And then we had one SIMCOM user today. The students came in. As the students came in, I met with both Interpreter 1 and Interpreter 2 to talk about the plans today.

I had mentioned that one student was absent but that we would continue with our lesson as planned. I told them the scope for the rest of this unit, which is on the digestive system, and mentioned that for the rest of this week, we're going to teach the vocabulary words, which today were large intestines and small intestines. Then, I said that when we come back from spring break, we will do a review day. We will do a word wall activity, and we're going to use my cardboard saw to create the digestive system so the kids can actually cut it out. And so, I showed the students and the interpreters what the saw would look like and explained that we would do kind of like a competition where the two groups of students I have a 3rd-hour science and a 4th hour science that are learning the exact same things. I thought we would have the digestive system, and they could have put a marble in it to see if the marble goes into the mouth and down the esophagus and the stomach and if it would follow that pathway.

I thought today was a little bit interesting. Last week, when the interpreters and I talked, they mentioned that they really liked having an interpreter sitting in front of one student, but I noticed today that they didn't do that. I suspect it's because the other student was absent and the other student relies more on the listening-spoken language with sign support, but I didn't ask. I wanted to ask, but for some reason, I felt nervous to ask, and I don't know why 'cuz I know that it wouldn't have been a thing.

Today, for some reason, I felt like I gave less direction, and I don't know if it's because I feel like our procedures are followed so easily or if I just rely on them to make those decisions based on previous feedback. But the students came in, they followed their procedures, and they did their class jobs. The one student who has the interpreter one-on-one basically who really benefits from that . . . the student went up to the calendar and looked around and then, without any additional prompting, went to Interpreter 1 and asked if Interpreter 1 would interpret for them. So, that interpreter went to the calendar. I noticed that the interpreter provided more scaffolds with the language.

First, one student handed the interpreter the DM, which is huge progress because, at the beginning of the year, the students would know they would use a DM but wouldn't really make the connection as to why or who would need it without direction, which is pretty normal in sixth grade. But then the students are independently realizing if this student uses ASL then I need to give the DM to the interpreter who will be voicing. So, I'm really excited to see that progression of student autonomy critical thinking, and accessibility.

I stood by the teacher's standing desk, so the students and the interpreter were at the calendar, which means I'm providing less support when they're at the calendar, which is good because I feel like it gives them that autonomy and that empowerment. They know what's going on.

I noticed that the student was asking the interpreter what the sign was or saying, "I can't remember." The interpreter, I notice, will wait for me to respond because they know that I'm a hearing person. For example, on the calendar today, it said DHH counseling, but this student didn't know what that word was. And so instead of the interpreter giving the sign, which I really

appreciate, I feel like they're anticipating me better knowing that I can multitask and still respond to the students because I'm listening to the interpreter's voice and I don't have to be looking at them. So, for example, I might be taking attendance or sending an email, and I can still respond across the room. So, the word was counseling, and before the interpreter would sign that word because the student was stuck on it, I voiced, "I wonder if any other students knew the sign for counseling." And so the student looked for the other students to sign it and they didn't know. And so, considering the role of the interpreter, I asked the student, "Who else can we ask when we don't know the sign for something?" And really, what I was anticipating was one of two responses. They could ask the teacher the sign, or they could ask the interpreter the sign because it is the educational interpreter, and they can provide that sign from my understanding. So, because I was across the room, or I suspect because I was across the room, the student asked the interpreter the sign, and the interpreter didn't look for me—immediately provided that sign which was appropriate in that context.

When we were done with calendar. The students went back to their desks, and I was really excited to see the student who uses ASL grab the DM. But then the student did something that I thought was weird. The student went to their desk, handed the DM to the interpreter, and said, "Can you give that to Willhite?" And Interpreter 1 started to do that. I looked at Interpreter 1 and made sure my face didn't look serious. But I was like, "No, the student can give me the DM. That is their responsibility." But it wasn't harsh. I made it very sound very friendly and jovial. And I feel like how I perceived their face was, oh yeah, you're right. They can absolutely do that. So, it was nice that we were responsive to that.

So, we started with our class jobs and then we had time for review. I noticed that the two interpreters, they didn't seem awkward, but definitely seemed a little hesitant in their role today. And I think it's because we had absences. So, I think that they were kind of looking towards each other about what is my role here? And today, I didn't really dictate that role. And I'm wondering if it's based on the structured feedback and interviews we had last week where they were saying, I feel like the classroom setup, we know what we're doing, but when I think of unexpected changes . . . I'm wondering if perhaps I could say, with these students being absent, what will that look like today? And perhaps asking that while the students are getting ready so that there isn't kind of that awkward trying to figure out what's going on today.

After the class jobs, students had 5 minutes to practice their note cards, and I asked the students to give them autonomy, "Would you like to practice yourself or would you like to practice with the interpreter?" So, the student chose Interpreter 1, and I don't know if they chose Interpreter 1 because that's who they wanted to work with or if they didn't realize that Interpreter 2 was in the back of the room, because typically they work with Interpreter 2.

So, I'm also wondering if I could have set that up from the beginning, asking the interpreters, or if I should have asked the student who they want to work with. So, after they reviewed for 5 minutes, I watched the interpreter. The interpreter was sitting right in front of the student and pointing to the words, but I also noticed that the interpreter was starting to back away a little bit, and I was really excited to explain why that's so important here in just 1 second.

So, after students reviewed for 5 minutes, we went to our next agenda point, which was learning our two new vocabulary words. Oh, before that we did a review together. So, I took down the visual stimuli, so I didn't have the Canva behind me, and I voiced, "Okay, we're going to do a quick review," and I told the students they could use their note cards.

And I try really hard to take turns and calling on students equally, but I'm also trying really hard to call on students that can fall within the cracks. Like those that are very quiet, they

don't want to be called on, but not embarrassing them, but making sure they're really understanding. And so, the first part I said, "Okay, what system are we learning?" Students raised their hands and I'm voicing at this time for this part of the lesson. And one student said, "Digestive system." And I said, "Okay, great. What's the first step?" Then the next student actually gave the definition for the digestive system. So, I don't know if they weren't watching the interpreter or if because we only had one interpreter, they felt like they didn't know who to watch at that point because our students with language deprivation really need those systematic, explicit directions, but when things shift, even for our listening-spoken student, I'm wondering if we left them essentially because we didn't give them the same autonomy that we gave the ASL student. So afterward, it feels like a growth opportunity for me, but potentially the interpreters too and making sure that all students that have interpreting services get that same check in.

So, we did a quick review, and we said Step 1 was the mouth, and then I gave a clue of what is that word that starts with an E that means it's a tube that connects from the mouth to the throat. Everyone's raising their hand, but the student who uses ASL again doesn't want to get called on; they don't want to get it wrong. I said, "It starts with an E. Everyone, look through your note cards." And I'm purposely waiting for this student even though the other students said they knew it. And so, I gave the scaffold, which I was really excited to see the interpreter use. Instead of them overfeeding and giving additional examples, I said, "What is the English word for the organ that uses the two F hand shapes?" And before I could show it, Interpreter 2 was now at the board. They had switched out and the interpreter had put the F handshape under the chin and dropped their nondominant hand down. And so, it was nice that we were picking up on that, and we didn't have any distractions. And then the student got it right. They found it and gave the correct answer.

During the lesson, an LSL student that I suspect would benefit from interpreting services . . . I don't know if they've ever had interpreting services, but it was really exciting because as we were reviewing, we noticed the word absorb.

And so, I pulled the Canva up, and I believe it was for the small intestines absorbing nutrients. The LSL student said, "What is that word?" And I said, "Absorb means to take in." And I was excited because the LSL student used their hands by all of their fingers pointed up and they pulled it down. They said, "Absorb like this." And I said, "It can be." And I was trying to think of an example. And so, I looked to Interpreter 1 who was in the background, and she voiced, "Actually absorb can be directional so it depends on what organ."

And so, I voiced, "That's a really good point." But I'm also realizing that because of the relationship and the collaboration, I think the students are more interested in acquiring sign because it's such a normal routine within our classroom. So, someone that I never see sign and never prompt them to really sign because I want to respect their choice is actually engaging in that.

So, we went through our two new words which were small intestines and large intestines. I actually used a strategy that Interpreter 1 had asked to use before, which is when I had the Canva on the board to make it very clear, for example the small intestines. I took the pen off the Smartboard, outlined the small intestines, and shaded it in so all the students knew exactly what organ because it had all of them on a picture, so they knew which one they were drawing on their note card.

So, it just shows that I can learn strategies from the interpreters, too, and be flexible and recognize, hey, if I find something that works, it doesn't matter who came up with it as long as the roles are clear to the students that any staff member can give feedback and supporting

feedback, And so by doing that, it was very clear for the students because before they were which one? And I felt a little bit frustrated because I had the numbers by each organ. And so, on the Canva, the left side has the organ and the number here, and on the right side, it has a profile view of the body and has the number by the organ, but it clearly wasn't enough. So, having that extra scaffold was clearly needed. So, I took that feedback.

So, we went through that, and I was telling the interpreters, "Now today, I know you normally work with the student one-on-one, but I want to see what they can do by themselves" because this student has severe language deprivation, but myself and my TOD colleague work on reading with the student in different classes. So, I really wanted to see can their IEP goal is reading on a kindergarten level, but I really want to push them, and I don't want ASL . . . which ASL is not a barrier to their reading. I know that. But I want to make sure they get opportunities to engage, reflect, and consume text without a scaffold automatically. Our zone of proximal development should be really clear, and we shouldn't be staying in one spot.

And so, I told the interpreters:

Now today I'm going to give them a worksheet and it's going to be hard, but I'm going to highlight the context clues for the words that we taught and I don't want you sign this. I want to see what they can do by themselves first

And I explained this would not be for a grade yet. This is for data collection. Is the instruction really clear in ASL and English? Because a student's first language is ASL, although they have that language deprivation and their second language that they're learning is written English. So, I highlighted on the student's paper, it had a paragraph written at the first-grade level because I wanted to push them, and it had a word bank with all the organs that we've taught so far.

So, it started from the digestive system, organs, mouth, saliva, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, liver, small intestines, and large intestines. And so, I highlighted the context clue for that student only. And the student, I think, was freaked out because they're so used to having that support and needing that, and they're horrified at English text. And I suspect they've had some educational trauma there. But the student immediately was like, "Can I go to the bathroom?" And I think they were really avoiding. So, I said, "Go to the bathroom, but you need to be quick." And it was 5 minutes, and I asked Interpreter 1, "Hey, if they don't show up in a minute, would you mind going to see if they're okay?" Because I can't leave students in the room with just a certified interpreter. They would have to have a certified teacher, a sub, or a para. And so, Interpreter 1 started to get up, and that student walked in, and I was like, "It's okay."

So, the student sat down. I could tell they were nervous, and they worked the longest. They turned around and saw their three peers had already finished and were on an activity called Gizmos to practice their digestive system. And so, I squatted next to the student, and they said, "Is this for a grade?" And they said, "No, it is not for a grade. It's just to show me what you can remember and what you can do yourself first. Then you will have an interpreter." And I think that that strategy worked so well because that student was the only one that got 100%. We're talking about a student with severe language deprivation who is horrified of English, so afraid of being wrong, got 100%. And the biggest impact was the student's autonomy and seeing that they can do things.

But more importantly, or equally important, it showed the interpreters that our students are much more capable than they think they are sometimes and that by giving them the opportunity to take a risk, there can be giant rewards. So, I think that the interpreters, based on their facial expressions and me showing them because I do show them the paper look at this

because they are invested. I think Interpreter 2 especially was, whoa. And what I suspect they thought was maybe I need to back off and see what she can do. And so today was a really great lesson. I was really excited with how it went and it was a really good success for the student interpreters and all of us.

Appendix H: March 12, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

Okay, today, March 12th, and we had 3rd-hour science. Today looked very very different than most classes, and today was kind of a stressful day full of unanticipated changes and changes in schedule. It started off with I had an IEP scheduled for the next class and I had forgotten to put it into WFM, which is a service where we request time off including release time and get subs. I forgot to do that. It happens, and so I did not have a sub during the last half of our 3rd-hour science.

We had a pizza party scheduled today for the students to use the video phone and independently order pizza themselves. That would start 5th hour on top of my having an IEP scheduled for 5th hour. Today was really hectic and really stressful.

So, right before 3rd hour, I asked the two interpreters to debrief with me, and I gave them an option even though I knew that it would make my life harder if they chose to continue with the lesson. And it's not that I'm telling them they get to choose, but I wanted to get their feedback. So, I asked for the two interpreters to come into my room and said, "Hey, here's what's going on." I said, "This is our last 3rd hour before spring break, and spring break's over a week long. We know our students regress and qualify for ESY." I did not want to continue teaching new vocabulary and because they were going to be ordering pizza today, there were other skills they could be practicing, and I hadn't considered it yesterday or the lesson before. So, I asked the interpreters how they felt if we went to a different classroom so other students could practice on the video phone in my room, and we could practice counting money—functional skills that they would use later that day, including how to read a menu, which is a functional skill, being able to identify the words or determine what pictures are on the menu, and how to determine if they have enough money to make an order.

So, we went to my colleague's classroom to do that. When we got in there, my colleague had printed fake menus for, I think, it was Pizza Hut or Domino's, but it just had the kids saying you could pick three or four items, and told you how much money you had, and you had to determine if you had enough money or not. And the interpreters were very supportive of that. In fact, they were like, "yeah, of course. Just tell us where you need us." We went into the room, and I had a station set up. So, as the students came in, Interpreter 1 asked me a question, which I'm really glad they remembered because quite frankly, I'm really overwhelmed with the workload right now. I'm very tired, and I need all the reminders I can get.

Interpreter 1 reminded me that we had been talking about signing clarity, meaning that sometimes our students sign lazily. They are slouched in their chair. They're not giving appropriate facial expressions. Their hands are kind of off by the desk and it can be really challenging for an interpreter to voice for them or for anyone to understand them if they're not signing clearly. So, Interpreter 1 asked me today, right as we were walking into that room, if she could interpret "badly", and I said, "Oh my gosh, yes." I love that idea to see if the students would give feedback. And so, I said yes. The interpreter sat in the chair while I was standing, and the students were all throughout the room. I told her I was going to voice the whole time. And so, I was watching her through my peripheral. She was sitting right next to me, and she was interpreting, but there was a really big lag time or wasn't very clear, and one student was kind of looking off and losing interest. No one was saying anything to the interpreter, which I was like come on guys there's no way you understand everything she's saying because they were totally looking off so I voiced to one student, "Do you understand what they're saying," and they were like, "I understand," and I looked at them suspicious so Interpreter 1 looked at them and said,

“Did you really understand me?” And one student said, “ehhh.” And I looked at them like, “Why didn’t you say anything?” And so, the other student was like, it really shocked me and shows an area for growth. The other student was like, “Yeah, I noticed, but I didn’t want to be disrespectful.”

And that really hit me we’ve been talking about this, but how many kids feel that social pressure when we teach students that you have the right, these are your rights, and you can advocate doing these things. But we still have to remember that in our society, adults are seen as that authority and that kids might not feel comfortable telling an interpreter they don’t understand them because they’re afraid it’s disrespectful and they’re getting in trouble. To me, that shows this need to constantly be reteaching and continuing to teach the roles of interpreters and SHOWING them what that looks like and explaining that it’s not only you’re right, but with everything else with their goals. We practice doing it. We have a final. We can prove their learning, but we don’t really do that with interpreters other than teaching them and moving on. So that was really eye opening.

And the interpreters and I didn’t have time to debrief about any of that or anything today because we were really really busy with our activity of calling the pizza and then the IEP, and there was just a lot going on. So, then the students went to the U-table to practice their math worksheets, and I had a student teacher who was supporting in that class, and the ASL interpreters were right there. They were ready to assist in every way they could. The students were really struggling with math because they do have a modified math class. The interpreters were really good about squatting next to them and making sure they were signing clearly, really seemed like they needed very little direction.

And we’re just very adaptable, which for someone, especially when you’re having a really bad day or a really overwhelming day, and just that pressure of feeling like you’re not doing enough or I can’t keep up of helping the paras, helping the interpreters, helping the students, helping my colleagues, scheduling an IEP, and then the parent doesn’t show up to the IEP, so I had to reschedule the IEP, and then calling Dominoes to schedule it, and then we had to teach them how to use the video phone. It’s just sometimes I don’t think that people realize just how many things that teachers have on their plate. And so, just some grace by the interpreters is so appreciated and they make me feel like they see me and they have positive intent. They know that I’m not purposely forgetting or leaving them out. They see I’m overwhelmed. And even Interpreter 2 later today said, “Hey, are you okay?,” and I didn’t even know I was showing that and I wasn’t mad.

I just felt very overwhelmed and I guess having grace with me today and understanding that today’s lesson really wasn’t a lesson but more of an enrichment activity for them to practice . . . and just the interpreters being very supportive even though they didn’t know exactly what the students were going to do until before the class. They were very quick to look over the copies of the menu, and they just jumped in.

You don’t get that all the time. I have worked with interpreters who are very rigid, and I’m not saying that’s right or wrong, but it gives me a lot of stress, and there are a lot of interpreters I’ve worked with that I feel like are quick to judge and think they can do better or just give you that vibe.

It just feels so comforting and safe to know that there are interpreters I work with who are just truly there for the kids and really adaptable. So, while today did not have a formal lesson, they did have enrichment activities, and the interpreters were just very supportive. Toward the end of 3rd hour, I asked a student and Interpreter 2 to sit next to me so we could practice that

student's IEP. One thing I really love about this student–interpreter relationship is respect. I asked the student, “Where do you want the interpreter to sit as I’m sitting next to you and showing you my computer screen?”

We were literally sitting right the student, and I were sitting right next to each other at two desks that were pushed together. And I’m asking her, “Do you want the interpreter behind me in front of me?” The student asked the interpreter to sit across the room in front of the board and that student has language deprivation. So, to me, it communicated they didn’t quite understand what I was asking. But I did ask Interpreter 2, I know that they said they want you to sit over there, but I really need you to sit closer so you can see the slideshow I’m showing them, so you know what to expect.

Interpreter 2 was very quick and was like, “yeah absolutely,” and moved their chair up and even told the student, “if there’s anything you don’t understand, let me know.” And there were times that I voiced, and there were times that I signed, and I did not communicate when I was code-switching because the student and I were one-on-one.

The interpreter was very fluid in that role and put her hands down when I was signing. And when I put my hands down, her hands went up. I led a workshop a couple of years ago called the Power of the Instructional Dance. And essentially what I’m saying is there is a relationship between the TOD and the interpreter that really is like a dance. And the more you work with each other, the more you anticipate each other’s moves, and it becomes a very seamless and beautiful partnership. And I just felt that today. because I had such a rough day, I really needed that pick me up.

Appendix I: March 26, 2025 Video Recorded Journal Scripts

This week is shorter and not a typical week that we would have. Monday is normally an 8-period day, but I was absent, and it was also changed to an odd day because this Friday we have a half day with special activity so it's not a normal instructional day. That being said, Monday I was absent, though I did email my sub and the interpreters the lesson plan for class that day. I purposely did not check in because often I feel like teachers don't have a work life balance and when we take paid time off. I really want to be able to use that paid time off without feeling the need to check on everything and be able to use that time effectively. Also, I don't want to burn out and we were missing about 75% of our students today. So, I'm not sure what was going on, but we only had two students today. One that has severe language deprivation and uses ASL and the other one I would classify between a listening-spoken student and a SIMCOM user. And so, I was a little bit worried about today's lesson plans because what we had planned was following our procedures and then because we're getting close to the last quarter for the year, the students were going to now apply for the class jobs that they really want.

So, I made a job application for the students to apply for what job, and it had a description next to it. why they wanted the job, what skills they feel like they needed to have to be able to do the job, and then they will eventually interview. And then we were going to go over our plan, do study, act goals for our class. We were going to review using a word wall game for the vocabulary on the digestive system. And then we were going to work on our cardboard project. Since we only had the two students, we did go over our procedures. The students have that down pat, especially these two students. But for this time for the job applications, I went ahead and proceeded with that lesson.

I went ahead and proceeded with the lesson, but because the one student with language deprivation really needed a lot of scaffolding, I made a quick judgment to go ahead and make that a really full lesson. And so, it did take a majority of the time. I did ask the interpreters before we started if they were comfortable participating in an interview activity where they could give feedback to the students and also have the students actually role play. And I know it seems like it's pretty young for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders to do this, but there's a lot of soft skills that are involved with it to be able to prepare to talk to someone.

Theory of mind is a really big area for growth for deaf and hard of hearing students with language deprivation. So, the interpreters said they were all about it. They said it was fine. So, what we did was I asked all the two students and the staff for us to go sit in the pod in the circle table and go over some of those key vocabulary terms in the packet. And so, the first before we went all together, I had asked the student of language deprivation and another staff member and Interpreter 2 to sit out in the pod and practice that and really go over the vocabulary. And I stayed in the classroom with Interpreter 1 and the other student to go over different parts of the application. And we did that for a little bit.

I felt like the interpreters felt a little bit awkward because we didn't have our normal signing students and I was a little bit worried that one of them might ask to leave class because of the need. So, I was really thankful they didn't ask because I would have understood, but at the same time, sometimes I feel like we have the opportunity to maximize instruction and sometimes all-hands-on deck is super appreciated because these kids don't have a developed language. So, we can't expect students without a developed language to understand fully the rules of staff if they don't even have a language.

So, sometimes I think we're so strict on roles without thinking is that really the most important thing or do we start to back off not just at age at development. So, I know I have different views on that, but the two interpreters and the two students and I sat at the circle table in the pod, and we just went over that vocabulary. And there was another adult working with Interpreter 2 and the student with language deprivation. And this individual is not a certified teacher yet. And so, they were really learning how to scaffold the questions, which it takes time. It's a hard skill to acquire. And so, the interpreter was asking that staff member to read the questions out loud and Interpreter 2 was really trying to break it down. But the student wasn't getting it. And so, there were times I intervened.

The other staff member asked Interpreter 2 to roleplay with them to show what a responsible student looked like versus an irresponsible student. And I noticed the interpreter was totally fine. In fact, very excited to do so. She was like, "Yeah, let's do this." But then it became really hard for that interpreter to roleplay and also interpret what the other staff member was doing. So, it was an opportunity I probably could have jumped in there and said, "I can do the role playing."

So, the interpreter would be able to focus on providing that support to the student. I was also helping another student. So sometimes it's impossible for us to catch every single thing, but Interpreter 2 is very flexible. And then Interpreter 1 was looking at one of the students applications and had mentioned to me, I'm not sure if the student understands what this says. And so, I asked the student and, lo and behold, they did not understand what they were saying. So, just almost like the interpreter's role today was, clarification and also support for staff and students also because the student that she was looking over didn't have interpreting services for this class.

So, it was kind of nice to go over that and really break down the language and then Interpreter 1 and I talk about our own experience as professionals and what skills we need to do in our job. And I talked about high school because a student asked me related to the applications, high school be really hard? Will I like it? And I explained to this student that high school will be harder than your transition from elementary to middle. It's just different. And the big key factor of that is maturity and your willingness to have growth mindset and make effort and fail. We use, first attempt in learning. And I was explaining to the student that the teachers there might not be as jovial and silly as I am, but that doesn't mean they're mean or don't care. It just means we have different personalities.

And so, I looked at Interpreter 1 and said Interpreter 1 is very quiet, very in themselves. They do a lot of thinking and I'm more silly and reactionary. And so, I asked the student, "Which one of us is right and which one of us is wrong?" And the student seemed confused. And I said, "Which one is better?" And she was like, "None of them." I'm like, "You're right. It's just different. Doesn't mean it's right or wrong. We're both right. It's just different." And so it was just a really good opportunity to work with the interpreter and explain the difference in that too. And also just explain the application process. So, not initially as much teaching on that aspect as I had planned. However, it brought a lot of really good conversation from it. And then we came back into the class after that.

So, the two students who are here could work on their cardboard project and creating the digestive system. And it was a really good opportunity for the students work together. Interpreter 1, when the kids went to the cardboard, mentioned that they were not going to come over here and I suspect it's because we're working on that advocacy meaning that we're working on the students of advocating for their needs like, Interpreter 1 can you please come over here, and so

the student who has language deprivation actually moved their finger gestured come here please. Interpreter 1 smiled and I think that they're really getting that this is all very good practice for the real world. And so, the students working on their project and it was really good.

Appendix J: Interview I, March 7, 2025

Interview 1

Date: 03.07.2025

Location: In-person

Interviewer: Dani Willhite

Dani Willhite: We are officially recording right now. Are you guys ready?

Interpreter 1: Ready.

Interpreter 2: (*claps hands*) Let's do it!

Dani Willhite: All together, we have 14 questions. I did provide those questions on the email just if you guys ever wanted to look at those before we met, or if you guys had any notes. So, whoever wants to go first, just overall a general question is: What were some notable moments for you in the classroom for third hour science this week? Anything noteworthy.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I mean, I think that changing the seating for [student name] was a really good thing. She seemed more confident. It seemed like she was more involved.

And I don't know if it took away the stress of the whole class, seeing that there was someone there just for her. What I mean is we were both in the front, but I just felt like she was a lot more engaged.

Interpreter 2: Same. And to tag on to that, she was smiling a lot. I don't know if you noticed that or not. It was on Thursday when we made that switch, right?

Interpreter 1: *Shakes head in agreement*

Interpreter 2: She was smiling a lot and, I don't know. . . I hadn't seen that before. That was awesome.

Dani Willhite: Yeah, very cool. Anything else noteworthy just in general?

Interpreter 2: *Looks at interpreter 1. Shakes head.*

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Dani Willhite: Our second question is how would you describe the overall dynamic between yourself as the ASL interpreter and me as the signing hearing TOD? What would that dynamic look like or what does it look like currently. . . this week?

Interpreter 2: Let me see if I can understand your question. I feel that there is mutual respect among the three of us, and I think I'll speak for myself. I feel very valued, and I think the question doesn't include the students.

Dani Willhite: Just between us. Just the three of us. What does that look like?

Interpreter 2: Mutual respect, and we feel valued.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I definitely agree with that. I think that this is just an overall positive environment. I always feel like if I think there's a suggestion on how to improve how we're working together as a team or how we're supporting students, I feel like that feedback is always and welcome. It doesn't always mean yes, I'm going to agree with you and yes, we're going to change something, but we're going to have a conversation about it. And I think that is really special.

Interpreter 2: Mhm. Yeah. And I think just in general, it's a class that I look forward to coming to. I don't feel pressured or stressed, and I just feel very welcome, and I want to go to class.

Dani Willhite: Awesome. Anything else?

Interpreter 1: Um. No, I don't think so.

Interpreter 2: No, I think that's it.

Dani Willhite: What challenges or successes have stood out to you this week? It doesn't have to be or it can be, and as well.

Interpreter 1: I think challenges are obviously our attention challenges with [student name] and just how to work through that and get him engaged. I feel like when we got him engaged, it's so good and he's asking these amazing questions. and he's excited about learning, but getting to that point of engagement is challenging.

Interpreter 2 Shakes head in agreement.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I think successes was, I mean obviously seeing [student name] really get in that groove where you could see that she was excited to learn. She was, you know, so happy. She didn't feel embarrassed at the access that she needed. Things like that I think is such a huge change from the beginning of the year. That was so nice to see.

Dani Willhite: So, almost like a willingness or an understanding of her own needs and understanding why she has one interpreter support. Are you saying she seems to understand the purpose for that and because of that, she's more comfortable in this environment with that setup?

Interpreter 1: I think understanding the purpose of it, but also accepting that it's okay. I think it felt to me, towards the beginning, there was almost some embarrassment or some not wanting to accept that I need this language in a different way than someone else might need the language. So, I think that acceptance piece is big, too.

Interpreter 2: I agree 100%. That was my comment, I was going to add on to yours. I do think she has finally accepted that and is excited about this opportunity. Like I have this opportunity. . . Nobody's judging me and she's excited. She wants to come. So, I do agree with all of that. And as far as challenges, yes, [student name] is very challenging to navigate as an interpreter sometimes. But I know that that's a work in progress, too.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. And I think another thing that might be worth noting, not necessarily specific to this week, but I think just this classroom in general typically has the challenge of having so many different modalities within it. I think we did a pretty good job at figuring out how to meet everybody where they were. Our first class this week, we were able to separate in those groups to respect everybody's modality. And then our second class, I feel like we're all just so flexible. You [Dani Willhite] were even like, "Okay, if I sign for myself, would that help you pay attention [student name]?" You know what I mean? Trying to meet them where they're at. But yeah, that is just an overall challenge of this class, is such a wide variety in the modalities.

Interpreter 2: For sure. But I do think as a success because we're also flexible and we work well together we are able to kind of see where our students are and meet them and kind of elevate them. I mean that's more your job than ours, but as a team we do that together.

Dani Willhite: Awesome. Thank you. Anything else with that question?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2: Shakes head no.

Dani Willhite: Ok, Number 4. Are there any observations or thoughts that you'd like to share before we dive into specific questions? These can be any anecdotes, any thoughts or feelings overall, anything that's open to the floor.

Interpreter 1: I think, as an observation, I thought it was really cool for you to ask [student name], "Hey, would it help you if I signed for myself?" We all know the benefits of direct communication. And so I think with the challenges of all these modalities and wanting to make sure that we're meeting all these kids where we're at, that you also make sure to try to

include him in that, that means sometimes I have to sign for myself and have someone else voice for me. So, I think that was an observation that I appreciated.

Interpreter 2: I think an observation I noticed was I think that all of our kids are all following along. There's not, we're focusing on this student or this student, while these other students are just sitting and doing nothing. No, they're all following along.

Dani Willhite: Would you say that this is a change from the beginning of the year?

Interpreter 2: Yes.

Interpreter 1: Yes.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me more about that?

Interpreter 2: I think the beginning of the year, right, it just has all of its challenges. We're all working with students we may have never worked with in an environment we've never worked together in. Obviously, I was added to the class after as a . . . to supplement communication and stuff like that. But I also think the modalities were a challenge, but I think just maybe the way the material was being presented. I mean, obviously, we learned these note cards are working so much more than working in a notebook was. And I think because we can adapt the note cards per student so easily, I think we're staying together more so than—okay, I'm gonna teach this to them, and then let me teach it to you, and then let me teach. I think that is just making everything so much more cohesive.

Interpreter 2: I agree. I think when anytime you throw that many students and adults into the room at the same time, and everything is new. . . the content is new. The figuring one another out is new and kind of getting in our own groove and then our groove together. All of that has to cohesively come together and that takes time. And I think because we've been working together so long up until now that things are much smoother. We figured out how to feed off of one another and how to just keep going, adapt, and keep going. Yeah..

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, and I feel like I know [Interpreter 1] and I have talked on several occasions, how we can make sure that we're scanning the room and looking at all of the students, to make sure that they are all following along, asking what do we need to do? And that has changed with time.

Dani Willhite: So, would you say just a follow-up question, would you say that your dynamic as ASL interpreters has changed since the beginning of the year or since we've both been in this class?

Interpreter 1: I would say, yeah, most definitely after every class we kind of do a check-in like "Hey how'd it go? Do you have ideas on something that we could do differently?" Or "Hey I felt like this kind of felt a little awkward today. Do you have ideas on how to improve?" And I think partly that's just comfortability. We're in that routine and we know what we're doing type of thing. yeah. I mean, I think we're also learning so much about working together as a team, not only as a team of interpreters, but as a team of supports for the students.

Interpreter 2 shakes head in agreement.

Dani Willhite: Awesome. Anything else?

Interpreter 1: Nope.

Interpreter 2 shakes head no.

Dani Willhite: Thank you for that. All right. Now, we're going to get into a little bit more specific questions. So, if you'd like me to reword those questions or kind of scaffold that a little bit, I'm happy to do so. Our fifth question is, How did the team members, meaning the three

of us, how did we establish roles during the lessons throughout the week? And you can interpret that however, your first response to that.

Interpreter 2: The first time I read the question, my reaction was that the question is a little hard to answer because I feel like the roles are already so clearly defined. That answer your question?

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me more?

Interpreter 2: I've been in your classroom since August, and since August, there have been procedures. So, every morning we come in what do we do? We, as in the students, what do you do? These are your expectations. This is the time frame that I expect you to get it done. It's so clearly defined. And once those procedures are finished, the students expect the lesson to begin, you [Dani Willhite] will start it out. I will interpret. Sometimes you do code switch, and so I might voice while you sign. And I think those expectations are already set up. So, I don't feel like I had many questions about what my role was during the lesson.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I agree with that. I think that we kind of spent the beginning chunk of the year trying to be really clear about what our roles were, but also being transparent with the students that we were kind of figuring out what that looked like. As we discovered, it wasn't a situation where just one interpreter works. So, it was like okay, so we have two interpreters, but what does that look like? One in the front and one in the back, and they switch? What does that look like? You know what I mean? I think that's changed over time, but we've been transparent about how that's changing and why that's changing with them. And so I think that transparency with them has made things a lot clearer. I think had there not been that transparency, there would be a lot of confusion. Why does [Interpreter 1] interpret sometimes versus [Interpreter 1] interpret other times? If I need an interpreter at the calendar, who do I ask? Can I ask either? Do I have to ask the one in the front? Can I ask the one. . . ? Do you what I mean? I think all of those things are things that we've just kind of been transparent with them from the beginning. And so there's not. . . I don't feel like in the day-to-day, there's a lot of work on our part to distinguish roles. I think they know that you're the teacher, and if they have a question about the material that's being taught, they ask you, and that we are the interpreters. If they don't understand what we signed, they can ask us for clarification. But also, that sometimes that might mean we just interpret the question for you [Dani Willhite] to answer.

Dani Willhite: Just a follow-up question. Was there a time or do you feel like we had a time where we were very clear on defining roles for each other?

Interpreter 1: I don't know that a specific time has come to mind, but I think we've done a really good job about asking if there's any confusion.

Interpreter 2: Mhm.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think if there's ever been a question of like "Do you want me to do this as an interpreter or do you not want me to do this?" You know what I mean? Or even on your part, if there's any question of "Are you okay doing this as an interpreter?" Or "Are you not comfortable with this?" There's always just that open dialogue. So, a distinct moment of okay, let's sit down and define what this looks like. . . Not necessarily, but just the everyday: "Hey, is this right? This is what I'm thinking. Are we on the same page? Do we need to expand on this?"

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I agree. And I think from August until now, there have been a couple of occasions where you have asked "Do you mind doing this? Would you be comfortable doing this?" And my response has always been "Yes, this falls under my scope of practice." I think is the right phrase. I am allowed to do this with my license. I would be happy to help. But I've never really felt any confusion. I just feel like from the get-go that was set up.

Dani Willhite: And [Interpreter 1] signed boundary. Would you agree with that?

Interpreter 2: Boundary. Yes.

Dani Willhite: Anything else about establishing rules?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2 shakes head no.

Dani Willhite: What were your initial thoughts about collaboration in general between TODs [teachers of the deaf] and ASL interpreters? That could be before we started working together. That could be at the beginning of the lesson. You can interpret that however you feel comfortable answering that question. And again, none of your information or names will be shared throughout this research.

Interpreter 2: I have mixed emotions. I think the idea of TODs and interpreters collaborating together sounds really interesting and I see a lot of potential in it. It could evolve into something really beautiful, especially if both parties have a good working relationship with clear communication and a willingness to accept feedback from one another and a willingness to try new things. When I say feedback, I don't mean feedback about teaching or interpreting skills. In this context, I'm referring to comments that naturally occur in a healthy working relationship. For example, if I said to you, "Have you noticed X, Y, or Z with this student? How do you feel about tweaking this or that to see if that improves the situation?" interpreters and TODs come from different backgrounds and we have different degrees but when we are in the same classroom I think we have a common end goal and that is to help the student or students become more successful but I've heard some negative talk about interpreters working with TODs which brings up a different perspective not all of my experiences have been positive some have but not all of it. I think some of that negativity comes from a breakdown or lack of clear communication. And sometimes there is a power struggle. I'm sure it can be uncomfortable sharing a classroom with an interpreter all the time. I also don't think there's always mutual respect within each other's roles. I'll be honest, I wasn't sure what working with you would be like. I was a little scared starting in your classroom. I was a little guarded but also hopeful that this would be a really good experience and it has been.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, and I definitely agree with the mixed emotions. I, too, have experience working with a variety of other TODs, and the majority of which experiences have not been positive. There's been, ironically, a lot of discomfort with each other's roles and establishing mutual respect. So, in the past, it's been just very uncomfortable. So, I think there was some anxiety around that. I think there's just naturally, in my opinion, a little bit of anxiety as an interpreter when you're kind of first put in the situation of working with a signing TOD. I never really worked with signing TODs before this. And so there's just like a new dynamic that's being introduced. As interpreters, typically we go into a room and the only other people in the room who know sign language are the client that you're interpreting for. And so having another adult who knows the language and is fluent the language and all those things can be a little scary. But also so much excitement. How cool is it to have that opportunity to be able to shift that mindset of just because there were all of these experiences before, doesn't mean that has to be every experience ever. So, definitely a lot of excitement. I think working with the signing TOD is so much accountability, which I think is amazing. And also just adds a layer of collaboration. I never feel like I can't be like, "Hey, what would you sign for this?" You know what I mean? I'm the interpreter, but that doesn't mean that I can't ask you for sign choices. You know what I mean? I think that's really nice.

Dani Willhite: Yeah, that's interesting feedback. Anything else you want to add?

Interpreter 2: And I felt a little guarded. I wasn't really sure what to expect.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. . .

Dani Willhite: Anything else on that?

Interpreter 2: No.

Interpreter 1 shakes head no.

Dani Willhite: Thank you. For Number 7, Were there any challenges, conflicts, or overall just unanticipated challenges that arose during the lesson for this week? And how are they not addressed? Any challenges. . . it can be anything that wasn't expected or something that gave you a moment of pause. It could be with students, with me, with each other. It could be interpreted in any way, what first comes to mind.

Interpreter 2: I think the challenge that I had you [Interpreter 1] were out for just a short time on Tuesday. So, I was in here by myself with students and other staff and there was a student who was supposed to be working on a EdPuzzle who was distracted, was not paying attention at all. And although this isn't abnormal for him, I think some of the other strategies to redirect that sometimes will work were not working with him. And so what happened was I noticed that you came over and you actually projected the EdPuzzle onto the Smartboard and did some direct communication and got his attention up there. And I think you were hopeful that he would be more focused and work through this EdPuzzle. My gut reaction was, "Oh. . . I'm not doing my job." And that's why you took over. That was my gut reaction. However, I also stopped to just kind of pause and thought about: 1) this student has a new IEP goal, 2) one-on-one direct communication is best, 3) and the end result was that the student was engaged and he worked on his EdPuzzle and that's all that matters. So, it was a win-win.

Dani Willhite: Yeah, I appreciate you sharing that. Do you have a response to her on that or anything like that? Any observations?

Interpreter 1: Um. . . yeah. I just. . . a general comment. I think it's really easy as interpreters to. . . especially the personality types that we have, to get in our heads and think "What am I doing in this situation that is causing this reaction?" And I think the reality is that it's not always something that we're doing that's causing reaction. There's a million other things going on, and just I think that used to be my go-to. . . my gut response is, "I'm not qualified. I'm not good enough. I'm the reason," and I think that really taking a step back from that and just realizing that there are so many other factors that are happening. Just being fully transparent. When [student name] was like, "I want [Interpreter 1] to interpret for me." It was like, I don't break down the language enough. I'm not doing a good enough job. I need to do all these things. And I was like, "No." There's just preferences. It could literally be as simple as [Interpreter 1] nails are shorter than mine. What I mean is it could literally be anything. Just because she's saying I prefer [Interpreter 1] that doesn't mean I'm doing anything wrong. That doesn't mean that I need to change anything about what I'm doing. Now, if she directly tells me, "Hey, I don't understand you when you sign." Then that's something that I can take the time and really focus on, but otherwise I'm just going to spend all this time focusing on something that's just a perceived problem. I don't even know that it's a real problem.

So, I think that's so common with interpreters. I think we're to some degree all a little bit of perfectionists. And so sometimes that moment of I don't want you as my interpreter feels personal even though it probably literally has nothing to do with me. You know what I mean? So yeah.

Dani Willhite: Thank you for sharing that. You want to add anything to that?

Interpreter 2: I don't think so.

Dani Willhite: All right. Thank you for that. For Number 8, How did the teacher and the interpreter provide feedback to each other during the lesson? And if you could think verbally and non-verbally, just anything, what does communication look like?

Long pause.

Dani Willhite: We work with the deaf community, so I think there's so many things we naturally do. And when I think of non-verbal, too, I think even sometimes gestures can look like signs, right? Just things that we naturally do is if you could just consider our dynamic within the classroom and what that communication looks like. Maybe even people don't pick up on what that communication looks like because we've been working together since August.

Interpreter 2: I have a few comments. One thing I really appreciate about you [Dani Willhite] is if you are going to code switch, you will announce it. Okay, I'm going to voice [Interpreter 1] is going to sign. That kind of thing. So that we know, [Interpreter 1], I know. And the kids know. I think [Interpreter 1] and I are both pretty good about saying "Hold on, please." "This student has one left." "We need just another minute on that."

Dani Willhite: So, just to be clear, when you're saying just a minute, are you interpreting the message or are they doing an assignment? Would you be able to differentiate those examples?

Interpreter 2: I think sometimes both. If I'm doing an expansion and I'm not quite done, I might say something kind of to the side like, "Give me just a second." Or, if sometimes the students are copying things off of the Smartboard onto the new card, and maybe they're not quite finished, and I noticed that. I will say "she's not quite done yet." That kind of thing. To try to give you a heads up. I know [Interpreter 1] and I are pretty good about that. Sometimes, if [Interpreter 1] is sitting by the board, I will ask her, "Do you mind outlining the esophagus? Can you write a number two next to it?" That kind of thing. I feel like we all do, head nods.

Dani Willhite and the two interpreters nod their heads simultaneously, and laughter ensues.

Interpreter 2: *Looks to Interpreter 1.* Do you have anything to add?

Interpreter 1: Um. . . yeah, I think that everything that she said, I also think that there's a lot more nonverbal than verbal happening a lot of times. And not even nonverbal, as in we're signing to each other, but just like if I can't get [student name] attention, I can typically just look at you and then look back at him, and you know. You're like, "Okay, we've got to do something to get him back." Or sometimes that I'm expanding, and just a look will tell you, "Okay, I need to take a breath so that they can finish expanding". I think verbally, like [Interpreter 1] said, sometimes it is a "hold on" or "I'm expanding on that just a second".

Interpreter 2: I can think of an occasion, too. It wasn't this week, but an instance where at that time we had [student name] and [student name] up front, and then one interpreter in the front and one in the back, and we would just kind of rotate. And I remember at one point [Interpreter 1] was doing an expansion I think with [student name] with one of them and. . . No I want to back up change that the lesson had moved on and so [Interpreter 1] was following you [Dani Willhite] but there was one student who was a little behind, and so I came up beside her and kind of expanded just for her so that we could keep things moving and she's like "Oh, ok. I understand."

Dani Willhite: Would you say that the way we communicate, just as a follow-up, would you say the way we communicate verbally and both nonverbally has changed from the beginning of the year to where we're at now here in March?

Interpreter 1: I would say yes. At the beginning of the year, we needed a lot more clear and expansive communication. I think now we're comfortable enough working with each other and we know each other's expectations that it's really easy to do those nonverbal communication things. I think at the beginning of the year if I would have looked at you and then back at the student you would have been like "What. . .?".

Laughter

Interpreter 1: I mean, versus now you're like "Oh, okay," that means he's not paying attention. Yeah, I think just the comfortability and the understanding of how each of us communicates with each other has just been a lot more smooth.

Interpreter 2: And I think because the communication is so open, I myself am more willing to communicate.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Alright. Anything else to add?

Interpreters shake their heads no.

Dani Willhite: All right. Number 9. What norms or routines were evident in fostering collaboration during the lessons this week? So, what things do we have set up, or what things are we considering or setting up ourselves, or naturally set up that just foster an environment for collaboration between the three of us? Or between you guys?

Interpreter 1: I think that it's been a little bit of a process, even just recently, kind of figuring out what's best and what setup is most beneficial. So, I think adjusting the setup of the room and how we're supporting the students. So, [Interpreter 1] one-on-one with [student name] and then me as the interpreter of the rest of the class, I think has been really beneficial.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I agree. I guess I . . . could you give an example?

Dani Willhite: Sure. Some norms would be anything that we do in nearly every class. It's something that we don't necessarily have to discuss every day in class because we've naturally set that, or that we've been explicit in setting up the expectations. And then just routines like what do we do? Do we anticipate the same routine or the schedule within class? Do we have to stop class and discuss it at that moment?

Interpreter 2: I think there's a need to be flexible. However, I do think we have routines. Every day the students come in, they're getting their note cards, they start their procedures, and they copy the agenda. Is that what you mean?

Dani Willhite: Yeah. It could be, yeah. You can tell me more about that. It could be what you expect from me, or what is going to happen with me, or what I know is going to happen to you. You could even tell me how you think, maybe I perceive what's going on. Anything that comes to mind.

Interpreter 2: The students come in, they do those things, you know. . . at the calendar time the lesson is going to start. Sometimes we do stations. I do feel like anytime there's going to be something out of the norm that's going to happen, you're [Dani Willhite] really great about telling me that ahead of time. "Hey, I just to let you know this is going to happen during class today just to give you a heads up." Which I always appreciate and I know [Interpreter 1] does too.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think a norm that just kind of like a routine that maybe wouldn't be as noticeable to somebody else, but we know this is how it goes, is the calendar. I think we've had enough communication with each other that it's just known that they're going to do the calendar and that we want them to advocate for themselves, that they would like an interpreter. And so I think if that was not established, I think to the teacher it would be like, "Um. . . are you

going to do your job?” You know what I mean? But we have that established rapport of like . . . no, we’re encouraging self-advocacy, so we’re going to wait for them to ask. So having that already set up, and we know that this is going to happen. We’re probably gonna have to pause for a second because they were going to forget that they need to ask for the interpreter. But yeah, I think if we didn’t have that communication about that before and that wasn’t something that we had established and set up as a norm, it’d be like, “What are you doing? We’re paying you for a reason, why you’re not over there interpreting.”

Laughter

Interpreter 2: And the same goes with tests or worksheets, anything that what the students need an interpreter for. We’re to that point now where the kids know they need to ask and so I just kind of sit back and wait for that to happen and sometimes it happens instantly and sometimes yeah, it may take them a moment.

Dani Willhite: I think that’s a really interesting point that you guys are bringing up, and I guess where my head is going is, “Wow, yeah, if there was a sub for me, would that still happen?” How would they perceive that? I hadn’t thought about that of the perception of others not knowing that we naturally have this environment set up. So, that was a really good point. Anything else? All right. Okay. Number 10. How did the teacher and the interpreters coordinate efforts to support student understanding and their access to both the language and the content? And we can break that down by piece if we want to. So, if we could just say, how did we work together to support student understanding? We can start there.

Interpreter 1: I mean I think that we kind of put in a little work before, right? So, you had sought out a deaf language model and got them to sign so that the students have access for our signers in their native language. And then also taking that a step further and saying, “How can I make this equitable for everybody in the classroom?”

And then having me do the voice over. So then, all of the students are getting the same experience with this station that we have set up. but they’re both getting equitable access whether that be from watching the video in sign language or whether that be from listening to the voiceover that’s happening. But, also still pairing that with the sign language so that even our kiddos who aren’t maybe fluent in sign language or don’t rely on sign language as a primary mode of communication are still seeing those signs that are being taught. So, I think that before work, really did a significant part of just supporting that collaboration and understanding for the students.

Interpreter 2: I agree.

Dani Willhite: Just a follow-up question, before we started working together this year, had you guys ever interpreted videos or done anything in terms of student assignments and collaboration on accessibility for assignments that might be asynchronous like the EdPuzzle you’re referring to or anything like that? Have you had experience with that?

Interpreter 2: I received some pushback when asked about making things more accessible.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, sadly, I can’t say that I did. I think it’s an amazing thing. I think especially as middle school staff are trying to really support and encourage independence as we prepare them for high school where they don’t necessarily have as much, I don’t want to say as much support, but there’s a different expectation there. And I think that sadly, a lot of our kids miss that opportunity to learn how to do something independently simply because the opportunity isn’t there in a way that is equitable for them to learn.

Dani Willhite: That's a really interesting thought. Just so I understand, you're almost saying that part of your job in providing accessibility can be through different venues, and by providing that accessibility, you're actually promoting independence.

Interpreter 1: *Shakes head yes.* I feel that way.

Dani Willhite: Anything to add to that?

Interpreter 2: I don't think so.

Interpreter 1: Um . . . I do think it's worth noting that I feel that it is part of my role as an interpreter who is working for this school district. I think if I were an interpreter who worked for an agency and I came into the school as a sub, and that would that be asked of me, I might feel a little bit differently. So, I think that's just worth noting the difference of expectations of interpreters in the community who are working through an agency versus expectations of interpreters who are hired through a school district.

Interpreter 2: I agree with that. I also think you [Dani Willhite] see the feedback forms that come in. When we submit the forms, but I feel that some of the information I've provided in feedback forms has been noted and then adjustments were made in the classroom in a way that benefited student learning. And so I think that kind of goes along with that too. I appreciate the opportunity to complete a feedback form.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me about feedback forms, what that is, and how they're used?

Interpreter 2: Yeah, so we can submit a feedback form anytime you want. And on the feedback form, we list the date, the student, our names, and then any concerns or strengths that we see. It's just in general feedback. And so I have feedback forms for both strengths. 1) Something that I see the student does really really well. Maybe they are really starting to utilize the interpreter more, learn how to use interpreter more. Maybe they're incorporating more classifiers into their sign production, that kind of thing. 2) Or concerns. I may be noticing the student isn't understanding what I'm signing. Can you learn from these vocabulary words? That kind of thing. It gives me as an interpreter an opportunity to deliver that information to you, the teacher of the deaf, and you can do what you want with that information, but I feel heard. I feel like there's this team that you're willing to listen to what I have to say and if you think that you can use that information and implement it somewhere in a way that the child will benefit and learn from it and that happens and it's really cool.

Dani Willhite: Thank you for sharing that. Anything else to add?

Interpreters shake their head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay, let's see. Number 11. In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement and learning during the lesson? So, how does lack of collaboration impact students' engagement into the content and just overall the learning of language, vocabulary, and content?

Interpreter 2: I don't feel there's ever been a lack of collaboration.

Laughter from interpreters

Interpreter 1: No, [laughter] I don't think so.

Interpreter 2: No, I don't. I think we worked well together. I already gave you the example of [student name] working on an Edpuzzle this week. The end goal was he ended up watching the video. He answered the questions and it just took some time and it took you figuring out how to best meet him where he is that day at that moment. And it worked.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I think this week was such a big example of how collaboration can ultimately lead to student success. I think with [student name], obviously I don't want to keep

talking about the same situation, but it was just so cool to see that Tuesday [Interpreter 1] and I talked and we're like, man, this setup just it just doesn't feel.

Interpreter 2: It's not working! [Laughter]

Interpreter 1: It feels awkward. It feels uncomfortable. If we're uncomfortable, they're probably uncomfortable. You know what I mean? And so to be able to have that collaboration stop and think is there anything that we can figure out on our own before we take it a step further and say, "Okay, we can't figure it out. Maybe we need to pull in extra help." But we were able to figure it out on our own. And we were able to say, "Hey, I think trying this might be really beneficial." And you [Dani Willhite] were like, "Yeah, absolutely. That sounds great. Let's give it a try." We tried it and it was so successful, right? It did with the student being so engaged overall seeming to have a super positive outlook on the lesson.

Interpreter 2: She was sitting up for the first time. [shocked and smiled]

Interpreter 1: [Laughter and smiling] I know she never sits up during class. So, I think that was really cool. But then also with [student name] at the beginning of class, we were on the struggle bus. We were on it hardcore just trying to get him to pay attention and just through the collaboration of continuing to press the issue you have to pay attention, you have to do this. Ultimately it ended up in him being interested and asking these super cool questions about the lesson. He was getting what we were saying and ultimately being able to then explain it to another student. How cool is that? We went from "are we going to see his eyes at all today?" I don't know . . . to, he's then explaining it to another student. I think without OUR collaboration and OUR consistency, we would have just been on the bus the whole time.

Dani Willhite: Tell me more about that situation. How did it transpire where [student name] was explaining to [student name]? Did the teacher set that? How was that initiated? Did that just happen?

Interpreter 2: So, I think the question was asked, I don't know if the specific question is important, but like we were explaining when your arm or your leg falls asleep and how does that feel? I was super nervous [laughter] because sometimes explaining those really abstract things to a deaf student is like, "All right, let me roll up my sleeves. You know what I mean?"

Interpreter 2 smiles and shakes head in agreement.

Interpreter 1: And I felt proud because I was able to explain it in a way he was like [snaps fingers], "I got it. I know exactly what you're talking about." And then he was able to reiterate and expand on what that was and what it felt like.

Dani Willhite: But what happened before that? How did he start explaining it to [student name]?

Interpreter 1: Yeah. So [student name] was struggling to understand. We were all kind of trying to chime in to help her in the understanding. And. . .

Interpreter 2: Her response was, "I've never experienced that."

Interpreter 1: We're all like, "No, I think you have," and I think I ended up saying, "How about [student name] explain it?" "Let's see if [student name] can explain it to [student name]." And ultimately, we all came together saying that she DID know what that meant. But I don't know. . . It was just so cool to see the change in that short amount of time from so much patience needed just to get a second of eye contact for the student to . . . by the end of the class, he's explaining something to another student like that. I think without the collaboration we wouldn't have gotten there.

Interpreter 2: It was really beautiful to see. And I think to add on to what [Interpreter 1] said, I'll speak for myself, but I think you feel similar. The fact that, yes, WE discussed how can

we troubleshoot this feeling of uncomfortable and just feels awkward and we need to adjust something, but what is it? the fact that we felt so comfortable coming to you [Dani Willhite] as the TOD. We didn't feel like we were going to be judged. We didn't feel like you would shut us down immediately. We really felt welcome and invited to do that. [It] says a lot.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 1: I think a lot of our successes in this class really root around the fact that they're just mutual respect and comfortability. Even in that situation, I can tell you with confidence that I've worked with other TODs that I would have not felt comfortable saying maybe we can try and have this student explain it to this student. I would have just kind of sat there in the struggle because that comment would not have been welcomed and in fact probably would have caused a huge deal because I'm JUST the interpreter. so I think the fact that I felt comfortable and there was no doubt in my mind that if you also felt like it would benefit the student, you were going to be on board. Never was I like taking her risk here [smiles nervously and laughs], you know what I mean? It was just like no, if she thinks that this will work, she's going to try it. And honestly, even if she's not sure that it'll work, she's probably going to say yes, let's try it. So yeah, I definitely think that a lot of our successes are because we are so comfortable being able to have those conversations.

Interpreter 2: There's that willingness to listen. You're [Dani Willhite] willing to listen. You're willing to try. And you might say no, and that's okay too. If you say no, it's never going to be a [psh. . . rolls eyes] no.

Interpreter 1: She thinks she knows better. It's not like that.

Interpreter 2: So, I'm going to be willing to try. Let's ask see what she thinks. It's pretty cool.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else to add?

Shakes head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Number 12: What strengths, skills, or overall strategies did each participant, and when I say participants, the two ASL interpreters bring to the success of the lesson? How did our contribution together make a successful lesson or not make a successful lesson?

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I think that, [Interpreter 1] skill of being able to really break down that language and meet [student name] where she's at to then raise her and challenge her a little bit. And then also my ability to still work with two other students . . . really three other students who are all at different levels and just kind of be able to scan between them and judge if there's a need for expansion or if there's a need to pull in the TOD to say, "I don't think they're really getting it." But then also your skill of just being able to teach because right? Not everybody can do that. But then also share that with us so that we can be prepared. I think sometimes that's the big challenge of interpreting is you don't know what you're walking into. And so when you do know what you're walking into, there's an automatic advantage. So, I think your skill of really having that foresight and being able to plan ahead and include us in that planning, is really, really helpful.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I mean, I feel like we've already kind of touched on some of these things, but I think you bring this level of being a TOD that. . . I've just not experienced before. And you're just really good at your job. And that in turn makes me a better interpreter. . . it makes me better at my job and it makes me want to continuously be better at my job. [Interpreter 1 shakes head in agreement] If I had to list all the things that you do, we'd be here all night.

(laughter) But I think you're really good at your job. You're really skilled. I do appreciate if you announce when a change is happening like, "Okay, I'm going to code switch now." Or, "change of plans, girls, this is what we're going to do instead." Just that open communication means a lot. and [Interpreter 1] just a great interpreter, too. I think she does a really nice job of kind of troubleshooting the three other students. She's a great resource for me. She's very dependable and I know that if I need something in that class, if there's a time when I need help, "how would you interpret this" or "Hey, do you want to give this a shot over here? I'll cover for [student name]." That kind of thing. We support each other, and that makes this job so . . . I don't feel pressured or stressed.

Interpreter 1: I agree.

Dani Willhite: Thank you. Anything else?

Interpreters shake their head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: So, Number 13, What reflections did the participants share following the lesson regarding collaboration? So, after a lesson this week, did we reconvene or did we have any discussions to make changes for the upcoming year?

Door is knocked on and opened. Dani Willhite pauses, walks up to the door, and closes it and returns to seat.

Dani Willhite: I'll read that question again. So, what reflections did the participants share following any lesson this week regarding collaboration?

Long pause

Dani Willhite: So, following a lesson, were there any conversations about how the lesson went or what we would try next time or. . . ?

Interpreter 2: I mentioned to [Interpreter 1] because I think she was out for part of the lesson on Tuesday. And during that time, I worked in stations on the note cards with two students, and during that time, I noticed that although these are new science vocabulary words they are big words and I noticed that the students were struggling with fingerspelling and so I said that I'm really going to make sure I include fingerspelling in my lesson for the next class. And kind of keeping that in the back of [Interpreter 1] mind too so you can just observe a lot of extra support with these bigger loads.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think a lot of the reflection for this week specifically has just kind of been between us interpreters. That feedback of fingerspelling and like I said before, I think we just kind of have this routine where we check in after every class and it might not be directly after every class but usually at lunch or the end of the day or whatever it may be like hey how did you feel today went? And sometimes it's a super quick, simple "I feel like it was great." All right, we're done. And other times it's more of "Okay, I'm really struggling with this fingerspelling" or "I noticed that we're using these note cards and that's definitely helping, but I still feel like we're lacking in this specific area." So, for this week specifically, I said I think just the collaboration has been a lot of us trying to talk through things and making sure that we [interpreters] are on the same page.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. And I know that I filled out a couple of feedback. . . just in general, feedback forms. I don't remember specifically what I typed on them right now but little things I noticed that I sent to you. I'm sure you'll take a look at and see if we need to change things up just a little bit for next week or not.

Dani Willhite: So, some of those reflections in terms of your perspectives may be sent through the feedback forms instead of a formal meeting or anything like that for consideration.

Interpreter 2: Yes.

Interpreter 1 shakes head in agreement.

Interpreter 2: If we felt there was a serious problem that really needed to be addressed, I think we would come directly to [class name] for 5 minutes or after school or something like that versus a . . .

Interpreter 1: I think the concept of feedback forms is still so incredibly new to me. I worked for several years in other environments and districts where the concept was not welcomed, or something that was felt like an option. And so I still find myself struggling sometimes of . . . I don't know what to put on this feedback form. And so I think my tendency does tend to be just coming up to you and having a conversation. I also have that luxury because on "odd" days, we have the same plan. So I think that's definitely something to note too is that this practice is something that's so new and so different than anything I've ever experienced that it's still almost a little bit of an internal struggle of like . . . wait a second, do I actually have something valuable to provide to this team, and how do I word that and what are they looking for versus what are they not looking for? I think there's a lot of internal conflict around that too.

Interpreter 2: Sure, I agree. I still experience that sometimes. I do a lot of questioning. Ok, I think this is important and note-worthy but not sure if the TODs will feel that way, so I do experience a little bit of that, but with time I'm feeling more and more comfortable with feedback forms. So, thank you for that.

Dani Willhite: Anything else on that one?

Interpreter 1: No.

Interpreter 2 shakes head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. And our last question in our first week of interviews, I can't even believe that. How might participants apply what they learned to improve future lessons? So, what did we notice in our lessons this week or in the past? And you guys gave several examples. So, even if you want to just emphasize whatever comes to mind. What did we do when we noticed a challenge or conflict or unanticipated change? How did we adapt, and how did that impact our future lessons or how will it impact our future lessons?

Interpreter 2: I mean I think we've done so much adapting that listing everything is too challenging. I think one of the biggest things that comes to mind is just noticing the difference between the notebooks versus the engagement when using the note cards. So that was something that we were able to notice and adapt to. I think improving future lessons definitely sticking with the new seating arrangement and the new arrangement of where the interpreters are placed. I also think it's a little less confusing for the other students when we were both in the very front of the room. It was like, "Okay, who do I watch and who do I not watch?," and I also think with [student name] new attention goal, it was really challenging for me as an interpreter to know when he was paying attention and when he wasn't because I couldn't tell was he laying down and just watching [Interpreter 1] or was he not watching at all? Do you know what I mean? And so I think that's more clear. And I think that we will hopefully be able to maybe get some more accurate data on that. And I'm curious to see if that helps at all with his attention. I can imagine trying to pick which person that's when you have two that are both moving your hands and sometimes they're on the same side and sometimes they're on different sides.

I can imagine that's challenging because you can't just browse back and forth because we're both signing at different levels. So, I think that will not only obviously benefit [student name] and help with that process, but I think it will also be helpful for . . . I've already noticed [student name] is watching me more.

Interpreter 2: I noticed that too.

Interpreter 1: Which I think is definitely a good thing, right? She has some hearing that we know that she likes to use, but I think it's good that maybe that's a little bit more clear now as to who do I watch and who do I follow and that kind of thing.

Dani Willhite: That's interesting that you're saying that. So, let me just repeat what I think I'm hearing, too. So, it almost sounds like when we think about or, as a TOD perspective, when we have an ASL interpreter and a multiple mode communication classroom, it almost seems like there are times where it really is appropriate that two interpreters are in a room to support those different language modalities. And when that did happen, we found a student who I would personally label as more of a SIMCOM user and more someone that uses it receptively but expressively uses their voice that it almost became more accessible for maybe those LSL kids and then those strong ASL—or those students with strong language deprivation. Would you agree with that?

Interpreter 2: ABSOLUTELY.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, absolutely. I think in the past when I've expressed concern about having multiple students that have such varying levels of language and having one interpreter that's being expected to facilitate communication for both of them. The response that I'm given is just do something in the middle and they get what they get. And to some extent I understand that if you're in an area with limited resources, things like that, but I think that just seems really crazy to me. at a place like [school] district that has so many resources and in my opinion, more than enough interpreters to make sure that each student is getting equitable communication. It feels like a disservice to me to stick one interpreter in there and say, "just do the middle and they'll get what they get." That just seems so unfair. You're not doing you're not serving each either student . . .

Interpreter 2 shakes head in agreement and signs "That."

Interpreter 1: . . . to the best of your ability. And I think that feels really gross as an interpreter. And I can't imagine how that feels as a student to have an interpreter and never really understand what's going on. You're always guessing and trying to figure out exactly what your interpreter is saying.

Interpreter 2: And at the same time, maybe that student who's being underserved, maybe doesn't know what to ask or how to put into words or how to advocate for themselves or maybe they're too shy to advocate for themselves and say, "This isn't working for me. You're not meeting my needs. You're my interpreter, but I don't understand you." Yeah. And so I think there is sometimes that breakdown of communication and middle schools in general. They don't want to be the odd person. So sometimes they don't speak up for themselves for whatever reason. I will say that at the beginning of the school year when I thought I was going to be the only interpreter in this classroom with this many students with this many performing at different levels, different modes. I was very overwhelmed. I was very excited about the opportunity, but I kind of felt like this would be an impossible task and it was kind of setting myself up as an interpreter for failure, and in a sense setting some of our students up for failure. No matter how awesome the classroom is or how skilled the TOD is, if I feel like I can't do my job. . . . So, I did reach out to another staff member but kept the specific out of course, but asked what would you do if you were in this situation and I was told go down the middle of the road and do your best and the students will get what they get and that's part of life. And it was really hard to hear and said it feels gross. It feels wrong and when there are that many resources available. From my perspective, it seems like we have plenty of resources. Why not put two interpreters in the classroom? If that's what's needed.

Dani Willhite: So, how did we get to two interpreters in the same classroom? How did that happen?

Interpreter 2: It's been a while, so I don't honestly remember it. I don't remember if I spoke up to the right person, if things were happening within the classroom. Maybe students were falling behind? Maybe it's something that you brought up. I don't know. I don't remember. But I remember feeling very relieved because I felt like that would allow me to be better at my job in a sense for you to be better at your job and for the students to be more successful.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I also can't say that I remember exactly how it happened, but I do remember just that moment of the explanation of, "Okay, we're going to put you in this classroom because this is what's going on and we really feel like it's a need." That was just the moment of "I'm in the right place" moment. I really do it just to explain how it feels to be told just to do your best and know that your best is not possible to be good enough for what these two VERY different students need. It's just discouraging, I think. And so that moment of okay, we have enough people that we can do this. We're gonna give this a try. That was such a breath of fresh air, such a feeling of like. . . "YES! These people see what I see!"

Interpreter 2: Yeah, it was pretty cool.

Interpreter 1: These people believe what I believe.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. And your question said, how will what you learned improve future lessons? I think at this point, I feel I kind of expect that each lesson will be an improvement. Not the lesson itself, not the content, but the way the class is structured and how smoothly the class runs. I think it will continue to improve with each lesson because that's what happens every single time from my perspective. Do mistakes happen? Yes. Do students score 100% on all their homework and tests and that? No. They're not supposed to. But in terms of us. . . the three of us being very flexible with each other. And kind of feeding off each other and just really getting into a groove seems to improve with each lesson from my perspective. And so at this point, that's what I've come to expect.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I think that we've done such a good job at establishing that rapport and that respect. How cool is it that, that's our expectation? That every week is going to be a little bit better because every week we're going to say, "Hey, I noticed this. Let's keep doing it." Or, "Hey, I noticed this. Maybe let's not do that again. Let's try something different," and then maybe the next week is, "Yes, we tried something different. That was a win. Let's keep doing that." I think we're just constantly finding ways to show up better as a team for our students. And I think that's evident in EVERY aspect of our work. I think that's evident in how they interact with us . . . how they interact with each other. I think it's evident in their test scores. I really do think in every aspect it show . . . that every week we're getting a little better. We're doing something a little bit different to meet them where they are.

Interpreter 2: And I do think it's important to note just because this is a research project. If you didn't have that collaboration and that communication because we [interpreters] have been in situations and I have been in these situations where a) these things wouldn't be happening in the classroom and b) in past experiences classrooms have been tense and there is conflict it isn't an open dialogue and it's just not.

Interpreter 1: I think . . . when there's that tenseness within the adults in the room, the kids notice, whether they notice consciously or unconsciously, I think they notice and then they feed off of that. So, I think the fact that we do work really well and they understand how we work together and they understand what each of our roles are . . . it really makes things go cohesively versus in the past I've been in classrooms where that's not the case. There's not that

differentiation of roles and there's not that evidence of respect there and that very quickly turns into kids manipulating a situation or feeding into that tenseness and uncomfortableness.

Dani Willhite: Is there anything that you were not asked that you would like to share?

Interpreter 1: I just think that it's worth noting that our personalities have a lot to do with how we work together. I think we all know that just personalities for any human not everybody works together super well. Some people clash, whatever the case may be. But I think our openness to learn and our desire to be better is something that I think we all have in common. And so even if there's places where we might disagree a little bit, I think we can all really base our relationship on the roots of those commonalities. I think that's where a lot of the positive things that are happening come from.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: All right, thank you. Moving forward, what I will be doing before I publish my research is I will actually send you guys both a transcript of every interview if you could just look over and give me an approval. just in case I misheard something or even if you thought of something later. you can also give anything that I know for me sometimes when I get home I'm like dang it, I really wish I would have said that. So, you guys are welcome to do that as well. and before anything I put in my research, like I said, I want approval before anything's posted. Thank you guys so much.

Appendix K: Interview 2, March 13, 2025

Interview 2

Date: 03.13.2025

Location: In-person

Interviewer: Dani Willhite

Dani Willhite: Today is March 13th. We had a short week. We only had two 3rd-hour science classes today because we don't have school tomorrow, which is Friday the 14th, for spring break, which means we will resume this study on Monday, March 24th. So, I think we're ready to get started. Are you guys ready? Starting with our general questions, what were some notable moments for you in the classroom this week?

Interpreter 2: I think for me something that was just that we had just very spontaneous last minute schedule changes that we weren't expecting. But because we all worked so well together, and communicated so well together, there weren't really any hiccups and the transitions were pretty smooth. I think that the kids settled down very easily. So, for me it was great.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I agree with that. But I think this week just in general has been a little bit out of the norm. We had some students who were absent on Monday and then some schedule changes on Wednesday. And so just overall the need to be flexible and just have that open communication of what do I need to do, how I need to support. yeah, I think everything still went really smoothly despite all of the little changes that happened.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: How would you describe the overall dynamic between yourself, as the ASL interpreter, and me as the signing hearing TOD?

Interpreter 1: I mean I think pretty similar to last week. Just very fluid. I mean I think we're all really good about communicating with each other when changes are happening. Obviously, our schedule was thrown off a little bit on Wednesday, and you were really quick to be like, "Okay guys, change of plans. This is what we're doing." You communicated that really well, as well as I think I had some ideas after class on Monday that we were able to incorporate in class on Wednesday. So just communicating between the both of us was just very fluid.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me about the topic, the suggestion you had?

Interpreter 1: Yeah. So, I think both of us interpreters have felt a little frustration over time just trying to get the students to understand that how they're signing is important. If they're slouched over or if they're signing lazily way down low or those types of things, it makes it really hard for us to be able to voice properly for them or just communicate with them well in general. I think that our reminders to the students sometimes just feel like annoying little pesters instead of legit no, I actually want to be able to understand you so that we can work well together. And so, I had just suggested that maybe I model what that looks like from an interpreter's standpoint of if you're signing lazily or any of those minute things that make it hard to understand that visual language. So, I suggested that we act like "bad" interpreters for a minute [laughter] and just see the kind of response that we get and see if there was a better understanding.

Dani Willhite: Tell me what a bad interpreter is. Tell me more about what that looked like.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, so we didn't do it for an extended period of time, but just for the short time that the TOD was making the announcements for class that day. I signed really lazily, really down low, so maybe the desk was even blocking some of my signs. I wasn't being super conceptually accurate either.

Interpreter 2: Can I just add to that? You also had a little bit of an attitude. As far as your facial and those [ASL] markers you were just very much I don't care to be here. That kind of thing. Just to really kind of emphasize what we don't want to see from them.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: Or what they don't want to see from us.

Interpreter 1: Right. Yeah, exactly.

Interpreter 2: How did that go? What was the response?

Laughter

Interpreter 1: Ironic, funny, I don't know how you want to describe it. One of the students I noticed—noticed immediately. Her facial expressions was like, “Okay, you're doing this on purpose.” And [Interpreter 2] actually noticed that two of our other students were actually paying attention more than they usually do.

Laughter

Interpreter 2: It was very interesting. I think they were curious, “Why are you doing this? This is out of the norm for you. What's going to happen next?” Yeah. So, in a sense, it grabbed their attention.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, but I had made a point after you were done giving your instructions to ask the students, “Did you guys understand me clearly? Do you know what we're doing?” And [student] was like, “I'm a little confused.” And I was like, “okay. Why do you think you're confused?” And she was like, “you were signing lazy.” And I was like, “okay.” [Shakes head up and down.] And you could kind of see in her face that realization of, “ohhh, that's what they're talking about.” And same with [student] when [student] responded, “You're signing lazy.” That's when the light bulb went off for [student] of, “ohhh, that's why I wasn't understanding you.” And then we were also able to have a short conversation of, “what do you do if you're not understanding your interpreter?” “Do you just sit there and not know what's going on?” And when we asked that, [student] was like, “well, it's rude. I don't want to be rude.” So, then explaining how you can be respectful but also realize this is YOUR access. If you don't understand, what's the point of us being here? So, speaking up and saying something is not rude; you can tell an interpreter, “hey, can you move your signing space up” or “hey, can you sign a little bit more clearly?” Or you can have those conversations with your interpreter.

Interpreter 2: And I think just to add to that, that was [student] response. However, [student] response whose personalities are completely different. She tends to be just more reserved in general, soft spoken, doesn't necessarily speak up for herself a lot depending on the situation, but her response was more like, in my words, it's ok, I'll just suffer through it. Those are my words, but that was my perception of what her response was, It's okay. I'll accept. It's fine. Just keep going. And so, then we explained, “It doesn't work like that. You need to let us know. And here's why.”

Interpreter 1: I also think maybe some more practice with that would be so beneficial.

Interpreter 2: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else? In terms of overall dynamics?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2: I don't really have anything new to add. I just appreciate that I know what I expect the class time to look like, because that's all we've seen so far. I expect smooth, "Here's what we're going to do." And if that's not what happens, you will really communicate with us to let us know and just keep going.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Shakes heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Number 4, are there any observations or thoughts you'd like to share before we dive into specific questions? Just any residual thoughts could be anything that you've noticed or your wonders, your considerations, anything.

Interpreter 1: That when other staff are working with a group of our DHH kids, maybe staff that aren't as familiar or have as much experience working with our DHH kids, that there seems to be a lot more of an attention struggle. I think because you [Dani Willhite] have so much experience and you're so good at what you do, you're able to kind of find that balance of, okay, it's okay that they're not paying attention to me right this second, because I really need to focus on this thing with this student, and then it'll be important that they pay attention to me. Versus I think some of the other staff that's not their norm. It's like, let me grab your attention. Oh wait, but you had a question. Okay, now back to you. And you've lost this student that you started with because they're like, you just got my attention and then you didn't need me, so I'm moving on. You know what I mean? So, I think that was something that kind of stood out to me this week. It's just that there's so many minute things that they have practiced and experienced that it seems like an easy everyday thing, but really that's like a learned skill. So, that was interesting.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I think it does kind of highlight that, and also kind of just remember not to take it for granted.

Dani Willhite: Anything else to add?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2 shakes head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. All right. Number 5, How did team members establish roles during the lessons for this week? How did we not establish roles? Or, how did we not establish roles?

Interpreter 1: For Monday, I think [Interpreter 2] had said there was just a little bit of a hesitation of, wait this isn't our normal how are we going to handle this? And I think that was mainly between us [interpreters], just kind of some verbal, some nonverbal communication of, how are we going to do this? Not as much . . . I think we were able to kind of figure that out without having to pull you [Dani Willhite] aside or anything, but also you had to change a little bit of how you were teaching based on the dynamic of the interpreters that were in your room. And then for Wednesday, I think it was just that short conversation before class of, ok, last minute thing popped up. This is what we're going to do. If you can do this and you can do this, that would be really helpful. Are you guys both okay with that? And then it was just very clear, this is what I would like from you. And I think that's SO helpful. I think sometimes the tendency can be just to just explain what's happening for the day and be like, "Okay, whatever you need to do to make that happen." But I think that very clear, "this is what I think would be best in this situation. Can you do this and you do this" was really helpful and I think it helped with the kids having their routine thrown off a little bit too. I think we were still able to get a lot of learning in despite their routine being thrown off.

Interpreter 2: I agree with that. I think there was a little bit of hesitation with the kids when the dynamic shifted and we said, change of plans, because I think we had to temporarily go over to another classroom. And so the kids were like, wait a minute. You're telling us to still do

our normal X, Y, and Z, but we're in a different room. And so, is this really what we're going to do? but I do think we found it alright.

Dani Willhite: What were your initial thoughts about collaboration between the TOD and the ASL interpreters for this week? About collaboration or lack of collaboration?

Interpreter 2: It was a little bit of a tricky one. Just going week by week. I think I mean this week, I expected the same that we've established, you were going to let us know what was going on, if it was different than what we've been doing, if there was anything that you felt like we might need to prep for. We got that information in advance. When plans changed, you communicated that with us as quickly as you could. I think my initial thoughts were just it's going to be a normal week. This is how it goes.

Interpreter 2: I agree with that. And I think you kind of introduced the idea of doing the cardboard cutouts to the kids and explaining what that would look like for them, and also explaining to us what that would look like for us, and how we can support the kids. I think it was clearly communicated and I think it was just like you said a normal thing that we would do.

Dani Willhite: So, just for clarification on my part. So, are you saying it's helpful when I'm explaining to kids in detail what our end goal is that also then helping you guys be aware of what to expect?

Interpreter 2: Yes, I think so. It helps me.

Interpreter 1 shakes head in agreement.

Dani Willhite: That's in addition to a private conversation about.

Interpreter 2: Yes.

Dani Willhite: Got it. Anything else?

Interpreters shakes heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Ok, here we go. Number 7. And I think this is pretty applicable. Were there any conflicts, or unanticipated challenges that arose during the lessons this week? And if so, how are they addressed? And you can get as specific as you want.

Interpreter 2: Personally, nothing comes to mind on Monday other than what we already said. There was a student absent. And so we kind of . . . the interpreter and I, kind of discussed what the dynamics would look like for us—that shift. Wednesday was a little bit different for me. We had a change of plans. We went into another room, and we're still supported in that room. But I think even for the kids to see we're in a different room, threw off one of our students. And so I think he just kind of like, okay, what am I allowed to do in this room? And are the expectations the same in this room? That was a challenge for me because I noticed his behavior was different. Yeah . . . what else? [Looks at printed interview questions.] We ended up doing a small group activity that threw off the students a little bit, because of the way that other staff member maybe posed a question to the students. It was a little bit different than how we would [ask the questions], because of not being as familiar with these students. So, I think the way I supported looked a bit different than the adult had to explain the information a little bit different each time until the student got it. I think I also kind of looked to you [Interpreter 1] for support on, did this concept work or maybe I'll try that concept with this student or that approach.

Interpreter 1: I agree. I think Monday we didn't really have too many challenges that popped up other than the student being absent which threw off our dynamic a little bit. Wednesday, we just had I mean, honestly a couple things that popped up. You [Dani Willhite] had an IEP that you needed to prepare for and then our students had an in-school field trip to practice utilizing the video phone, and to have that conversation about how to use the video phone to order pizza, and then getting the pizza from the delivery driver . . . all of those things.

And so, you [Dani Willhite] had communicated with us that, the previous day you got feedback that they really needed some more practice with that in order for us to feel like we were setting them up for success and not failure. And so, there was extra need in that area. And so, I think we all agreed that we were willing to be flexible, and kind of change gears as to what was being taught and what the plan was for the day. I agree that the changing of the rooms and we're not doing our normal routine. We don't know where to look for, what to do next, did impact some behaviors and just some overall actions on the kids, and I mean honestly, probably on our parts too, we had to I think have even more open communication because we were like, Okay, what's next? Okay, what are we doing? And adding to the kind of the challenges of really figuring out how to break down the language more than we might normally have to. Just because like you said it was another staff member who's not necessarily really used to working with our kids, and doesn't maybe fully understand the spectrum of their needs yet. So, they're still learning how to word things and present things in a way that our students might specifically understand. So, in my perspective, it was a little bit more work on our part of, okay, how do we break it down? I don't want to make this staff member feel like we're overstepping or we're not respecting what they're doing, but I also want to make sure that the students not being put in a position where they feel disheartened or less than because things aren't being worded or asked the way that they normally would. Because they would normally be able to answer some of the questions that were being asked, but because they were being asked the way that they were very confused. And so, yeah, I just think it was a little bit more challenging and took a little bit more brain power to figure out, okay, how am I going to interpret this in a way that feels equitable and also ensure that I'm maybe the teacher that we're not understanding in the way that it's being asked. So, I'm going to rephrase it in sign language to get to a place of understanding.

Interpreter 2: But I think at one point I also clarified you [Dani Willhite] were still in the room and so at one point I also clarified, is your goal is this what we're working toward and you said yes. I also wanted to add . . . I did support student in separate area of the same room to support a student for her IEP, and I wasn't sure how that was going to go just because that dynamic was a little bit different, and honestly, I wasn't sure how the student felt about that dynamic with the three [student, Interpreter 2, and Dani Willhite] of us. But I really think it went well. I think you [Dani Willhite] communicated well, and I think it helped them [student] kind of make her feel more comfortable going into the IEP—a little more confident. But that was a new dynamic for me.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake their head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: How did the teacher and the interpreters provide feedback to each other during the lesson? It could be verbal or nonverbal.

Interpreter 1: I think in our kind of normal ways, on Monday, if there were times where we needed more time to expand on what you were saying or to catch up or whatever, I think at some point we were both like, hold on just a second, so that we could catch up. I think the nonverbal was not as apparent this week. But we usually use the nonverbal more so with the student that was absent on Monday. So, yeah, I think it was just a lot more of the verbal this week and just felt like the, hold on, let me catch up really quick or hold on, I think they mean this, before we kind of expanded on that.

Interpreter 2: I agree with that. And I just think again, because things have been set up so clearly up to this point, and when we come in this room now things are pretty smooth and we do communicate well there's personally no hesitation. If I ever feel like the student didn't

understand something and maybe they need another expansion or explanation on this, or they just need time to process everything. I don't have any hesitation to communicate that with either of you, because like I said, up to this point, in that I think it's all been pretty smooth.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, we're also pretty good about just knowing when a situation calls for, a hold on let me just expand this language wise, and when it calls for, hold on I need you to explain that again. So, I think we're pretty good at judging what is not clear and understood based on language and sign choice, and what's not clear and not understood based on the actual content. So, I think we're good about differentiating that like, hold on I just need a second or can we explain that again? And then I think you, as the TOD, are really good about being able to judge, okay, do I need to verbally reexplain this or is this a time where direct communication is going to be the better way to expand and make sure that the students get to a point of understanding?

Dani Willhite: Ok, thank you. Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: What norms or routines were evident or not evident in fostering collaboration during this week's lessons?

Interpreter 2: Monday I think was normal except one student was absent, and so the kids came in and got their note cards, they sat down they started copying the agenda, they knew what to expect and so from my perspective again, Wednesday—it was not a normal routine. So, the kids were aware of that, but I think they adjusted pretty quickly.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think it's actually really interesting this week just to see how they respond to a normal day with all of their routines compared to how they respond to a not normal day where they don't know exactly what's next, and they don't know exactly what we're working on or exactly what the expectations are. And I think that made our efforts of communication and collaboration even more apparent, because I think if there was that lack of collaboration or lack of communication between us, then I think Wednesday would have just been complete chaos, and it wasn't right? Sure, we had a minute to adjust, and we needed to figure out what we were doing, where we were. The kids needed that minute to figure that out, but once they figured it out, they were like, okay, the adults are all on the same page, so we're just going to trust that they know what we're doing and we're going to follow their lead.

Interpreter 2: And as a result, there was still a lot of learning that happened.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. Absolutely.

Dani Willhite: Tell me about that. What were they learning?

Interpreter 2: So, if I remember right, we were prepping for the pizza party and so the kids were really working on life skills. Okay, let's look at a menu. Let's see. We have all of these food choices. We have all of these drink choices. We have all of these dessert choices. How much do each one of them cost? And here's your budget, and you need to figure out how you have, and, oh, you went over budget? Okay, we've got to figure this out and backtrack and you only have this amount of money. And for me, what I noticed, some of our kids really struggled with this. This was new, or maybe they've learned it in the past, but they forgot. And so, what does this mean? I don't understand. And so for the student that I was supporting, we had to go way back. We got out fake dollar bills, fake coins, and, okay, if you give me this much money, I'm going to give you this much change. I do think she's learned it before because eventually it came back to her. But I don't know that she has had the opportunity to actually go into a store with this amount of cash and purchase something and get cash back. Makes sense. It seemed very foreign to her and so we had to go all the way back to the beginning and kind of act some of

it out. But she finally got it, and she really enjoyed it, and we were able to do several examples. Meaning I think she made a total of five different combinations of main dish, drink, and dinner.

Dani Willhite: Anything else to add?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2 shakes head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Alright. How did the teacher and the interpreter coordinate efforts to support student understanding and their access to language and content?

Interpreter 1: I think on Monday it was more of like an unspoken thing. I think, as I said before, we just kind of figured out what our class was going to look like between us, and then you were able to adjust how you were teaching based on that. I think for Wednesday, [laughter] it was more complicated than that. I think our conversation beforehand of, okay, this is what I'm thinking for this class period, and this is what I think each of your roles would look like and what would be helpful for this class and these students, was helpful. Just to kind of reiterate, I mean, I think the access to language looked different than it normally does. I think typically we have more of a community interpreter feeling when it comes to our roles in a normal class, but we're able to do that because we have an amazing TOD who knows what she's doing, and is able to pick up on all of the little things, and adjust how you're teaching what you're saying, how you're saying it. Versus working with other staff who are not as used to that. It provides a little bit more need for us to be more flexible in how we're interpreting, and how our relationship with the students looks in that moment. I think typically when we're with a student, there's a clear, I need you to interpret the questions for them for this worksheet, or there's just very clear lines versus I think yesterday we had to be a little bit more flexible and, okay, we're going to interpret the questions, yes. The staff member is going to do their best to explain. Yes. And then we're probably going to have to go through and explain without the attached English in order to get to that place of understanding. So, I think the collaboration that was needed in order to get to the point of feeling like they had access and feeling like they had adequate language to understand the content was definitely different than normal.

Interpreter 2: I agree. And I'll just add on Wednesday when you asked me to support a student in prepping for the IEP, kind of a practice run through. This is what the situation's going to look like. That was new for me. I hadn't experienced that. And so, I was following your lead. and the student was clearly nervous going into it. And so her responses were a little bit out of the norm from what I see from her. So, again I was just following your lead, and one of the examples that I will remember for a long time is . . . I think I asked the student where would you like me to sit because you two were sitting here [signing two people sitting next to each other] and then I didn't know where to sit and so I asked the student to try to empower her where would you like me to sit and she put a lot of thought into it. She walked around the room, and she was looking at all I think she was a little confused at first, clearly very nervous. And so, I was just waiting, following your lead, and finally she told me to sit way back here [across the room directly facing her] and I said, "Okay." So, I sat back here and just kind of gave her a moment thinking maybe she would speak up, but eventually you kind of encouraged her and explained why. And I just thought that transition was really smooth, and I think the student still felt very empowered once you kind of explained why this might be beneficial. I just thought the whole experience was really nice and smooth and better . . . It went better than I anticipated. So, yeah.

Interpreter 1: I don't know if this maybe fits better in a different question, but it just made me think of it.

I think something that's really special about the relationship we have together is that I think we really provide a safe place for the kids to experience failure or uncomfortableness, or any of those things that I feel like a lot of times they don't get the opportunity to do so because people step in before they get to that point. And so, I really appreciate that because I've seen some significant learning moments from giving us the space and opportunity to let them sit in discomfort for a minute. Let them sit in that failure for a minute, and see if they're going to recognize and say something, or see if we're going to have to step in and say, "How are you feeling about this?" To start that conversation of, how do we learn from this experience to be better in the future. I think so many of our GenEd classes and I mean really just life in general, don't always give our kids the opportunity to fail. And when they are given the opportunity to fail, it's BAD, where you just see them completely fall in their face, and that's not doing anybody any good. But giving them the space to fail safely, to fall with the cushion, I think is something that's super special about just our dynamic. And we're able to communicate those things . . . I think this might be a moment that we need to let them fail and see what happens.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I'll just add on to that. I think you did a really nice job of explaining that and I do think this was a great example. This situation prepping for the IEP was a great example, because this particular student with the amount of time that I have spent working with her just seems very shy, very reserved. [She] doesn't have a lot of confidence although that is increasing she is making great strides I think, but I think has this huge level of trust with you [Dani Willhite] and I think she trusts me, and I think she trusts you [Interpreter 1] and I think she felt very safe in that moment and in that environment. And this is a practice. It's okay for me to just calm down a little bit, and think about this and nothing bad's going to happen right now. I think she just really felt safe and really trusted US, and it was just really nice to sit back and watch that kind of fold. So, yeah . . . I agree.

Dani Willhite: Great feedback. Thank you both. That was really awesome. In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement and learning during the lessons this week?

Interpreter 1: I mean, I think in a lot of the same ways that it always does. I think we have very fluid and open communication, and the students have come to expect that. They expect that we're going to be on the same page. They expect that we all know what's going on. We're all working together to make sure that we're doing the best that we can for them. I think on Wednesday for the interpreters, I think our teamwork maybe looked a little bit not like teamwork, because it was kind of like a conquer and divide type situation where [Interpreter 2] really, sat down and worked specifically one-on-one with [student] and it just kind of happened that I was able to kind of sit and work one-on-one with [student]. And so, I think that separation because I mean [student] voiced in the past, why do I always have to work with [student]? We're always doing the same thing. [Student] is saying while everybody else is doing something different and I don't think he quite gets why we have it set up that way. But I think it was nice that we had the resources to be able to just separate. I think trying to explain that to both of them at the same time when they both needed vastly different expansions would have been super challenging, and probably not as beneficial as we were separated. So, I think our teamwork didn't look like teamwork, but it was very much so teamwork.

Interpreter 2: It was. And I was able to work one-on-one with the student, but when she was working independently doing some of this math, I was able to look at . . . there were multiple students sitting at the table. So, you had three other students. Is that right? Four?

Interpreter 1: I don't remember. Some were in and out. Yeah.

Interpreter 2: Multiple other students. And when [student] was busy, I was able to kind of just monitor their faces. Are they understanding? There was also another adult in the room. And [Interpreter 1] clearly working more with [student] at the moment, but are these other students who also rely on us, not as much, but they also do rely receptively on sign language. I was able to watch their faces and just kind of scan on the table from where I was standing, and that was nice . . . just to make sure that they didn't just do a quick check in. Are you good? Do you understand this? And they were doing great. So, I think it did look a little bit different, but I still think it went pretty smoothly.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I agree.

Interpreter 1: Perfect example of flexibility is needed.

Dani Willhite: Yeah. And that teamwork looks different at times, right? Especially as someone who's unfamiliar with the dynamic that there's a lot of working pieces that.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, it was a lot of work. Yeah, it didn't look like it, but it was a lot.

Dani Willhite: Yeah. What strengths, skills, or strategies did each participant bring to the success of the lesson? So, that could be one person, it could be all people. What value did it bring? What background did it bring? What did that look like?

Interpreter 2: I think one of your [Dani Willhite] strengths is that yes, we have daily norms and daily expectations and daily routines. However, if we need to be flexible, we can do that with you. That's going to be okay because we've seen that unfold, too. Okay, guys. Plan B. We're going to go do this. And you'll still let us know what this is going to look like. Right. So, we are not doing A, B, and C. We are going to do X, Y, and Z instead. But that's clearly communicated. And so I don't, as an interpreter following a TOD's lead, I don't feel like this is going to be complete chaos. Nothing good is going to come from this . . . there's not going to be a lot of learning happening. This is going to be wasted time. I know that even though plans are changing we're still going to be busy and we're going to learn and it's going to be a successful class. The kids are not going to be set up for failure. I know that because of what I've seen so far, and that's a really good feeling as an interpreter supporting students and supporting a TOD.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, all of that. And I also think all of those things are amazing from the interpreter perspective, but I think something that's really starting to hit home, and I've been thinking it a lot about lately is just noticing the difference of how the kids respond to our interaction compared to how the kids respond to other situations where there's multiple adults that are working together, but maybe don't have that communication and collaboration. I think the level of trust that our kids have in this class specifically is heart touching. I mean, really, the fact that they know what to expect from the class. They know what to expect from you [Dani Willhite]. They know what to expect from me, they know what to expect from [Interpreter 2], and they know what to expect of all of us together. I think that is something that's often not necessarily realized. And I mean, I'm the perfect example of it. Here we are halfway through the school year and it's just now hitting me that because of the trust that we've built in each other and then therefore they're seeing in us the way that they're showing up for class now . . . the way that they're more engaged. Just the overall way that the class runs. There are things that I see happen in this class, and it's not a big deal because they trust us compared to if that same thing were to happen in a different classroom with adults that didn't have the same relationship and collaboration that we do. The response is vastly different.

Interpreter 2: I agree wholeheartedly. Yeah.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: And along with the trust the students have seen up to this point, that you challenge them and sometimes you challenge them for a “grade” and for this is “not a grade.” And they are now at this point where they’re willing to try and possibly not be as successful. They might fail this worksheet or this homework or this quiz or what this isn’t for a grade, and they’re okay with trying. I watched that unfold with two of our students with the I don’t know what you called it this week.

Dani Willhite: It was a progress monitoring. It’s a paragraph with context clues and a word bank with pre-taught vocabulary words for this unit. All the words we’ve learned up until this point.

Interpreter 2: Yes. So, once you clearly explained to the students, “I’m going to have you do this without support first. Try your best and then we’ll try it again later if we need to or just we’ll try it again later with support and see what that looks like.” And once the students understood that there’s really no risk here for me, I’m just going to try my best. I expected to see a couple meltdowns. I really did. And I saw two students [student] and I saw [student] do it too without any hesitation and I was like, “wow this is huge for these kids because they trust this situation that you have set up and they’re okay with it and it’s beautiful.”

Interpreter 1: And I think that goes back to my point before of they have the opportunity to fail safely. I mean, I think even in the beginning of the year before we had built that trust and built that this was a safe place to fail, the willingness was not there.

Interpreter 2: Not there at all.

Interpreter 1: And I think because before this class when they had the chance to fail, it was bad. It was bad enough that they don’t even want to try if the possibility of failure is there. And now, we’ve built this trampoline where they can fall and it might hurt for a second, you know what I mean? But they can also bounce back up and keep going.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, and I think, maybe I’m wrong, but I think knowing these students knowing they’re going to try the same activity later with all the supports that they need to be successful. And then they can compare the two, right? Look what’s happening. I’m learning these things. I’m being successful in school and these people trust me and believe in me. I just love it. So, I think that really speaks a lot to you as a TOD what you’ve accomplished so far. And it’s exciting to see how much progress kids have already made, and how much potential they have. And as far as your strengths, [Interpreter 1], I think it’s important to note . . . [tears up and wipes eyes] that in this environ . . . sorry.

Interpreter 1: I’m a sympathy crier . . . [tears up]. So, here we go.

Interpreter 2: Because of the students that are in this classroom, and their wide variety of needs and modalities, and where they’re currently performing grade-level? Grade-wise? There’s probably a better way to phrase that, but I could not do my job as well as I do as an interpreter without your support and the way that you collaborate with me and the three of us collaborate together. I could not do this without your support. There is NO way that these kids could be as successful as they are without having you as a TOD and two interpreters, but especially I think [Interpreter 1] and I work really well together. [I] can just kind of look at her out of the corner of my eye, and she’s going to give me a nonverbal, or maybe she’ll feed me a sign or whatever I need in the moment. And I am just so grateful for you, and I am so grateful for you, Dani, as the TOD. I just think there’s some amazing things happening in this room, and I’m really honored to be a part of it. [Shakes head]

Interpreter 1 mouths “yep.”

Dani Willhite: What reflections did the participants share following the lesson regarding collaboration?" What did they share or what did they not share?

Interpreter 2: I think you [points to Interpreter 1]

Interpreter 1: Yeah, so I think on Monday it wasn't necessarily specifically to this lesson just like an ongoing notice that we're struggling overall. I mean, especially with [student], but I think just in general with the understanding that you [students] need to sit up and your hands need to be in appropriate space and you need to use appropriate signing space and palm orientation, all of those things. So, I think I can come to you [Dani Willhite] and just like, "hey, this is really, I think, a struggle that we're just not getting. Can we maybe try this to see if there's some resonance in this aspect of things?" So, I think that was our big notice this week of okay we're noticing that this is a pattern that's happening over and over and over again. How can we collaborate and work together to kind of try and find a solution? And I mean, ironically enough, it had nothing to do with the lesson specifically, and everything to do with just life skills in general.

Interpreter 2: Regarding collaboration, I think something I am maybe this is more of a challenge. Maybe this goes back up to one of your other questions. I'm not really sure which one it fits best under. I really struggle sometimes with [student] behavior and it can be a little distracting to me as an interpreter, but thinking about how the week went I think I always try to kind of reflect on myself. How did I do as an interpreter in the classroom this week and what can I do personally to make it better next week? Although I don't necessarily support him as much as you do, maybe I feel like I'm always trying to think of new ways to approach my signing to better engage him. I don't know that that's something that's in my control. I don't know if that's more of something. I think it's just a challenge that he has right now, and maybe it has nothing to do with anything that's in my control, but that is something that I'm always just kind of reflecting on. But I think in terms of the lesson itself and the way we collaborated.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Alright. How might participants apply what they learned or discussed to improve . . . let's say when we come back from spring break . . . how might that impact the lessons that week?

Interpreter 2: I think we have two or three vocabulary words left, but we talked about . . . you explain to the kids the project that they're going to be doing, and so I think they know what to expect. Maybe they'll think about it over spring break. Maybe they won't.

Laughter

Interpreter 2: Let's be honest, but I think that's something for them to look forward to. They know it's like a competition between the two classes. which one is going to be better? And so hopefully they'll take what they've already learned, and know that they still have to learn about vocabulary words.

Interpreter 1: I think just overall this week was such a vast difference between the 2 days. Just a reminder that it sounds so silly, but we can do hard things. We went from a pretty normal day on Monday to a very out of the norm day on Wednesday, and both were successful. I think with that success there will still be some challenges when we come back. Just because there's that extra day that they were out of their routine, they weren't learning what they had been learning. And So, I think there will probably need to be some extra effort on reminder of where we left off, and what we did learn last week, and those types of things. Yeah, I think just overall that education is crazy. [Laughter]

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I think there were a lot of takeaways from Wednesday's learning. A lot of them were more life skills than the science skills just because schedules changed a little bit. But I think the kids learned a lot from that experience. They got to experience a lot of firsts or a lot of news. This is new for me. I haven't done this before, but I think they can take those life skills and apply those to life, and whether it's actually applying to learning in the classroom for science class or just to general life. I think there were definitely some takeaway elements for them.

Interpreter 1: Absolutely.

Interpreter 2: A lot of learning was happening.

Dani Willhite: We just finished our Week 2 of four. So, excited. Let me stop recording.

Appendix L: Interview 3, March 27, 2025

Interview 3

Date: 03.27.2025

Location: In-person

Interviewer: Dani Willhite

Dani Willhite: Let me turn this all the way up. Make sure we're recording. All right. Hi guys. It is our third week, which means next week is our final week of this study. So, I really appreciate you guys. So, I'm just going to jump right in if you guys don't mind. What were some notable moments for you in the classroom this week?

Interpreter 2: A little rough.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me more about that?

Interpreter 2: The schedule was a little different this week again.

Dani Willhite: So, the teacher was out Monday and had a sub and so we only had one science class period.

Interpreter 2: Correct.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I definitely miss the routine. I think I've kind of gotten to the point where I look forward to knowing what's happening, and knowing that we're going to be able to work together and it's almost like, okay, what challenge are we going to overcome this week, so I think not having those has definitely I'll speak for myself, but [that] definitely impacted me. Even just personally, I was just not super excited about the day yesterday, know what I mean? It was just different. The routine was thrown off and I'm sure that could be picked up by students . . . when you don't walk into class as excited as you normally are, I'm sure they feel that.

Dani Willhite: So, you said about yesterday. Can you tell me more about yesterday?

Interpreter 1: Honestly it wasn't necessarily related to yesterday, just that we, started the week with a sub and it was the week from spring break and so they were also out of their routine and just out of the normal and so I think not having Monday to be like, okay, we're going to, get back to it. And then, just started the week off not that great. And then yesterday we had several students absent. So, again, it was like we don't get our routine because we just needed to adjust, know what I mean? It wasn't ideal to keep that routine when we didn't have all the students that we normally do. So yeah, just a little challenging.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I agree.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay, thank you. How would you describe the overall dynamic between yourself as the ASL interpreter and me as the signing hearing teacher of the deaf?

Long pause and faces of discomfort.

Dani Willhite: Honesty is always the best.

Interpreters look up and to the side.

Interpreter 1: I think this week again just with it was not our norm in almost every sense of the word. So I think there wasn't as much room for collaboration. There was a lot of last minute "this is what we have to do because this happened" or whatever it may be. So I think this week . . . meh.

Interpreter 2: I agree. Yeah. There weren't as many opportunities to collaborate.

Interpreter 1: Yeah . . . and I think that's something that I look forward to. I have never had the opportunity to collaborate so much with somebody about something that I'm so passionate about. And so when that opportunity is not there, it's like. [snaps finger and shows a disappointed smile] That sucks.

Interpreter 2: I agree. Something was missing. Something was obviously missing and part of our job description is to be able to adapt and be flexible, so I understand that that becomes the challenge.

Interpreter 1: Absolutely. [Laughs]

Interpreter 2: Yeah. But the vibe is off.

Dani Willhite: If you don't mind me, I know it seems like you're [Interpreter 1] getting a little emotional. Do you mind talking about that a little bit? Is there any more that you're wanting to share?

Interpreter 1 laughs

Interpreter 1: I think we'll touch on it shortly. [Wipes tear]

Dani Willhite: Ok, Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. Number 3. What challenges or successes have stood out to you this week?

Interpreter 1: I think there's been a little bit of both still. Obviously the challenges of you [Dani Willhite] not being here on Monday, and going back break which is . . . [puts] all the kids out of their routine and trying to readjust to being in school all day again. And then on Wednesday half of our kids still weren't there again, so adjusting again. How do we accommodate best? But I think the successes were still . . . on Wednesday, we were still able to have some really good and meaningful conversations with the students around interviewing for class jobs and stuff like that. And then they were able to work on their project a little bit. They were super excited and engaged with doing their cardboard cutouts of the digestive system and stuff. So that felt like a success. They were engaged, excited, participating.

Interpreter 2: And I think that . . . yes, I agree with all of that. I do think that although having a smaller group on the side was in some ways, challenging, in some ways it was also easier because we were able to spend more one-on-one time, if that makes sense with the students.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: So that was kind of a luxury in some sense. It was exciting to see the students so excited about their project. [They] worked hard on it. And it was also the time students work with another adult on interview questions, and a couple of the questions were tricky, and so [they] struggled a little bit with the language. And I think having that smaller thing there for more time to really break down the language and work with the student until finally she understood those specific questions, and it was kind of cool to see that breakthrough finally happen. It took some time but if I may have been I think she was happy with her success.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. Number 4. Are there any observations or thoughts you'd like to share with us before we dive into specific questions?

Interpreter 2: One of our students had some really . . . really good leadership skills with her project, and it was fun to see she seemed confident in working on her project.

Interpreter 1: I think just the observation that I'm sure it's to be expected, but coming back from a long break is a big . . . if . . . I don't know why this break felt so much more so than previous breaks, but almost [felt like] starting a new school year. It just felt really like we were starting over on something.

Interpreter 2: The scholars [students] were hungry and tired, and not focused and yeah it was just an adjustment.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreter 2 shakes heads 'no.'

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Dani Willhite: How did the team members establish roles during the lessons this week or during this lesson on Wednesday?

Interpreter 1: I think just because it was a kind of a spur of the moment, like "oh wow, half of our students are gone." I think you [Dani Willhite] just kind of communicated with us what you wanted it to look like. I think we just kind of started doing our normal thing. As much as we could with not all the kids being there, and then once that needed to be adjusted, how we were doing or whatever, you [Dani Willhite] communicated that with us, "this is what we're going to do [Interpreter 2]. This is where I would like you [Interpreter 1]. This is where I would like you guys to do in this time if you guys are comfortable with that." Nothing more so than a plan ahead for this class. It was like in the moment, hey, this is what I would like.

Interpreter 2: Remind me that it's been a long week. Was this the class that we did touch base with beforehand or was that another class? We talked about possibly doing a game and we decided not to do a game.

Dani Willhite: Yes, that's the day that we talked about not doing a game. if you want to talk about that conversation if . . .

Interpreter 2: I think there was a very quick discussion about, okay, this is kind of what I think our class is going to look like today. And we talked about playing a game. And then after some discussion, we realized that because of the upcoming class or even realized because of the upcoming test that maybe time could be better spent on maybe vocabulary words or something other than that.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me more about the game and that conversation, or I think you had some feedback.

Interpreter 2: So, I think the game was called I Have, Who Has. And for anyone not familiar with it, you have to correct me . . . actually, can you explain it again?

Dani Willhite: Sure. So, I'll explain what it looked like. So, I had a piece of paper. I think it was labeled one through eight. And each number had two sentences. So, the first sentence may have bolded words. *I have* and it might say the first stage or step in the digestive system, and then underneath it would be bolded and said *who has* the second step of the digestive system, or who has and it would have the definition of a key term. Does that jog your memory a little bit?

Interpreter 2: Yes. And so, I think I suggested that that game would take a lot of time and it was played in another classroom and the students . . . I don't think really appreciated it . . . didn't really benefit from it as much as maybe what we've seen in the past. For example, writing down the vocabulary words on the index cards and studying them. That might be time better spent. And so, I think I asked you about it and you [Dani Willhite] said, "Yeah, let's not do the game and let's do something else instead." [Looks to Interpreter 1] Is that what happened?

Interpreter 1: Yeah. Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Awesome. Number 6, What were your initial thoughts about collaboration between the TOD and you as the interpreters?

Interpreter 1: Okay. I'm just going to be really honest and say not super positive at first. I think it was a little bit frustrating. Understandably so. We all have things that pop up and we all have the right to our PTO [paid time off] but having a sub coming back from a break felt intimidating right like we're coming back from a break, so we're already out of our routine, and then we have a sub as well which is even more so . . . I think as a staff member that works in that room, I wasn't excited about it, right? It's to be expected that it's going to be a little bit chaotic, and then I think the lesson plan wasn't necessarily fully understood by the sub, which made things kind of tricky during the class period. So, I think my initial thoughts for the collaboration for the week was this kinda of sucks, you know what I mean? And I don't mean that in a mean way, but just to be honest, it wasn't like . . . We've set the bar up here from the beginning of the year, how we worked together. And that day was just . . . like it wasn't a great day. Those days suck when you want to come into work and see the things that you are excited to come to work for, and that's just not what happened that day. And that's okay. And we picked right back up where we left off on Wednesday and it was fine, but we started the week a little rocky [tears].

Interpreter 2: I agree with all that. And I think my initial reaction to Monday was just this time wasn't well spent. And that is not a comment geared toward the sub at all. It is just more clear . . . to again . . . coming off a break and that was rough. And I think up to this point, the scholars [students] that we work with have shown us time and time again [that] they need that structure. They depend on that structure and then it's not there . . . It's kind of I think in their minds . . . right? From their perspective. So yeah, Monday was a little rough. Wednesday was better. But again, we just got a couple students and some of the things were just different. It was different. But I think on Wednesday we did our best and yes.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shakes their heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. Were there any challenges, conflicts, or unanticipated challenges that arose during the lesson, and how were they addressed?

Interpreter 2: There was a challenge, but I had not anticipated one. [Long pause]

Dani Willhite: Tell me about it.

Interpreter laughter

Interpreter 2: The student that I was supporting didn't understand . . . I don't know how to phrase it. The student was given an assignment and there was another adult in there who was helping the student break down the language, and I think the student didn't fully understand. And so, I asked the adult if they could present the information in a different way, which they did. And it was just a really challenging concept for the student who themselves are already language deprived. And so we worked really hard, and I think finally the student understood, but it took some work, and it was just a challenge that I didn't anticipate to be so challenging, but again, the student was able to successfully complete the assignment.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me what that assignment was that was a challenge?

Interpreter 2: Sure. So, the students were given a job application for their classroom jobs. And so the application they have to fill out what job they want to apply for, and they have to write down things like what skills would make them . . . skills or qualities they have that would make them a good candidate for this job. Because perhaps multiple students want the

same job, and how their skills can contribute to the class to make it run smoothly; things like that, and just a lot of language that maybe this student hadn't been introduced yet or didn't fully understand. So . . . but she got it! And I was really proud of her.

Interpreter 1: I think really just the challenge lied in that not all of our students were there. So, that last minute change of what are we going to do? Not necessarily with, okay we know there's a challenge what do we do . . . we figured that out, and then I think the rest was fine. So, I think just that initial challenge of, okay, how do we adapt and continue in a way that is so beneficial for the kids who are here? They still deserve that right to learn because they did show up. So, I . . . think that was the biggest challenge of just *okay, how do we adapt?*

Interpreter 2: And I think maybe just to go back up to Number 6 if we didn't already say it as far as collaboration goes, I think because the class was so small, I think we kind of looked at how can we best maximize the time—these two scholars [students] and best utilize this time. Yeah.

Dani Willhite: I'm going to go off and add another question. How did that make you feel with the activities that weren't necessarily a normal part of routine and plans? Can you tell me more about that activity and more about what you may have been asked to do, or . . . just interpreter that how you like.

Long pause

Dani Willhite: For Wednesday . . . because I think the theme I'm hearing a lot is unanticipated challenges or things happening. Can you tell me more about your initial thoughts in general on how Wednesday's lesson went?

Interpreter 1: I feel like it went as well as it could have. Right? For me personally, I was craving a little bit of normalcy, and so obviously in that aspect of things, we didn't get there but I think the lesson that we did do—I think was still very relevant to the class and their life skills and all of those things. It was originally part of the class plan still, so that wasn't really new. It was just adapted because we had more time to kind of expand and work with those two students on a more intimate level. Kind of really . . . really hone in on what their needs were, and how to best work with them as individuals compared to balancing how to do it as a class to best support everybody. And then the cardboard activity that again was already a part of the class. You [Dani Willhite] had set that expectation before spring break that, "hey this is a project and this is what we're going to do." So I think it was—yes, unanticipated and challenging in that way just because having an expectation and then changing it last minute is challenging sometimes, but not in a way that it felt like overwhelming or that you [Dani Willhite] were asking inappropriate things. You know what I mean? I still felt like I was in my interpreting role, it wasn't like, hey, since we only have two students here, could you do this thing that really is more of a para[professional] or a thing? You know what I mean? I was still focused on language and helping understand language and modeling language and all of those things. So, I felt like you did a really good job in that aspect. I think it's really easy when we have more adults than we had students. And so I think in those situations it can be easy to be . . . Okay, maybe we could do this and maybe it's a little bit outside your role but I still felt very much within my role.

Interpreter 2: I agree and the two students that we had are . . . one is very ASL and one is very LSL [listening spoken language] and so their needs are very different . . . Where they're performing at academic levels I guess is different. In some ways those two I would say they significantly benefited from it.

Interpreter 1: Oh, yeah! They definitely benefited from it. And I think that's something I appreciate too. I see a lot of times when there's a significantly reduced class size or something

like that, it can be really easy to be like, oh . . . well everything I had planned we can't do any of it because then the rest of the students are behind. So, I really appreciated that we still stayed on topic and we still did things that were still very beneficial to the students even though not everybody was there.

Interpreter 2: I think the comment was something like, oh, well we will help the students that are absent get caught up when they come back instead of, we're not going to do anything today because we're missing most of our students. It was the opposite of [that], let's keep going. Let's stay on track and then when the other students come back . . . yeah . . .

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Thank you. Number 8, how did the teacher and interpreter provide feedback to each other during the lesson? It could be both verbally or nonverbally?

Interpreter 1: Do you want specifically during or just about anything?

Dani Willhite: Anything.

Interpreter 1: I mean I feel like we still did this a pretty decent amount. I know originally, I think the plan was that the students would themselves kind of think of the shapes and sizes and such of the different organs to put them together. And as the interpreter, I have noticed a pattern with our students that understanding abstract things like that can be super challenging. And so I think I had offered the feedback, and I even came to you with a printable option of, here's something that we could print out and have them trace that way they're not just coming up with these shapes, and because I really like thinking ahead on that, I think as an adult I would find it challenging to okay I'm going to look at this 3D body part on this mannequin, and then I'm going to try and draw it. But then I also have to think, what I mean? I like that felt like a lot for an adult. And I wanted this to be a fun project for the kids that they could feel proud of versus a project that felt overwhelming and then you look at the end and you're like. [shrugs shoulders and grins]

Interpreter 2: Especially since there's a competition.

Interpreter 1: Exactly! But I was able to come to you [Dani Willhite] with that feedback and say, "hey, I just think this would be a lot easier for them, and I think it would just go a lot smoother," and you [Dani Willhite] jumped on board right away and were able to . . . you [Dani Willhite] were good with adapting to make that work. And I think the kids liked tracing it, and being able to just have fun cutting it versus really stressing about the size or those types of things. And then also during the lesson, I think there was just really good communication for the really small things like, okay they're going to go to the saw and you're [Dani Willhite] going to show them how to use it. And I was able to say as an interpreter I know that something that we're working on is helping them learn to advocate for themselves. So, I'm going to stay here until they ask for me. You know what I mean? And it was just such a subtle and smooth [like] "Yep, got it." So, I think sometimes those little verbal or nonverbal things can really be easily overlooked.

Interpreter 2: Mhm.

Interpreter 1: But again, I'm thinking of it from . . . if it was a sub interpreter in that room, they'd be like, "Wait, what's happening?"

Interpreter laughter

Interpreter 1: Even an outside adult, "why are you just going to sit there instead of getting up and doing your job?" You know what I mean? So yeah.

Dani Willhite: Number 9, what norms or routines were evident in fostering collaboration during the lesson?

Interpreter 2: I think things like interpreter placement. We've established at this point, but sometimes we do just sit there instead of following the students to the next activity, and we're all on board. We're all over it because the students need to . . . we're really encouraging it to support their advocacy, and I think they are at this point most of them.

Interpreter 1: [laughter] Yeah, most of them.

Interpreter 2: Are picking up on it. So, it's kind of a norm for us.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, and I think also just the communication aspect of things. Like typically if you didn't send an email out in advance, you try to find us and kind of check in for a second before class, "hey, just letting you know this is what I'm thinking." And I think that's something that has kind of become a norm for us. We know if there's anything crazy out of the normal, you're going to tell us. Yeah. I think as far as routines, like she said, I think the kids have come to expect that . . . [thinks on words] . . . NOT to expect us just to get up and do things without them saying, "hey, actually, I want you over here" or whatever the case may be. I kind of think they expect us to throw them a few curve balls, and that kind of goes back to what we talked about in our last meeting, like that being a safe space. They don't feel intimidated or scared because we did it. They just know that's what we do and that's how they learn.

Interpreter 2: Yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: How did the teacher and interpreter coordinate efforts to support student understanding and their access to language and content?

Interpreter 1: With it being a short week, I don't feel like I have a lot of examples, but I know on Wednesday, [Interpreter 2] was working with her student and an additional staff member, and then you [Dani Willhite] were kind of working with the other student, and I was kind of there for support for a student who have interpreting services. But I asked her, beforehand, "would you prefer just direct communication or do you want me to interpret everything?" And she was like, "no, I just want direct communication." And so, I just kind of sat alongside in case she changed her mind, or if there was anything that needed expanding. But I think that you [Dani Willhite] did a really good job. Like this is a student that, in my opinion, I would suspect her interpreter usage to grow as she gets older and goes on to higher grades and stuff. But right now she doesn't necessarily use them a ton, but I expect that to maybe increase over time and so . . . I thought it was really neat that you found little ways to incorporate me into that mini lesson, whether it was, what is the sign for that or how would you sign that or do you know why this is a sign like how does that connect to the English, or if it was . . . do you notice that [Interpreter 1] does that? Why do you think she does that? And if you don't know, maybe you could ask her right now why she does that. And I think that just really encourages and supports that interpreter-student relationship without it . . . sometimes I feel like if the interpreter does that themselves, it can almost feel like a little overbearing like . . . hold on I said I didn't want you. So, I thought that was really cool, just that coordination of we might not need you full-time hands up right now, but still how can we incorporate you in a way that's also continuing to support the student, and how their needs may change as they continue to use interpreters.

Interpreter 2: And I think if I can just add on to that . . . I think you [Dani Willhite] do a really nice job of doing that with all students.

Interpreter 1: yeah.

Interpreter 2: So you [Dani Willhite] did a really nice job with this particular student and this interpreter, but you're just really good at doing that in general. Doesn't matter what

student you're working with. If there's an interpreter that goes by, you help the student understand how to best utilize the interpreter. And if they're not using it, then maybe it'll encourage them, like you already said.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: So, I think that's kind of the norm that we see now, which is nice.

Interpreter 1: I just want to note that that's something that stands out. Because anytime I've worked with other teachers of the deaf, it's very much like a power thing. I don't want you to look at them more than you look at me or I don't want them to help you more than I'm helping you. There's no power struggle here. You're [Dani Willhite] very much accepting of . . . [points to Interpreter 2] . . . some things you just need to look at your interpreter for. And I think we're very much okay saying [points to Dani Willhite], "you need to ask your teacher for some clarification." You know what I mean? There's no power struggle of I have to be the one to help you or . . . know what I mean?

Interpreter 2: Mhm.

Interpreter 1: It's smooth. It's nice and it's not something that I've experienced with other TODs [teachers of the deaf].

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreter 1: I don't think so.

Interpreter 2 shakes head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement in learning during the lesson?

Interpreter 1 smiles and looks at Interpreter 2.

Interpreter 2: I think this week was just a little different. So, there weren't as many opportunities with teamwork because of the way the last time was structured on Wednesday, and the activities that we did. I will say, even though there weren't as many opportunities, it was a really good feeling to know that when the opportunity presented itself and we do need the team, it's GOING to happen.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: There's not going to be a power struggle or there's not going to be an unwillingness. So, that's a big deal.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I almost disagree just a little bit in the way that I think there was a lot of teamwork. It just looked very different than it normally looks.

Interpreter 2: [Laughter] Because it's getting easier every week. I will agree with that.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think that but also, I think Wednesday our teamwork looked more like, okay you sit here and you help this student understand this thing and you help this student understand this thing. I think it looked and probably felt more . . . like individually, you know what I mean?

Interpreter 2: Oh yeah. I do agree with that. I forgot about that.

Interpreter 1: I'm going to sit you individually, but really, we all had the same goal. I mean we're all working towards the same thing of getting the students to understand this one thing. So, I think the teamwork just looks different than it normally looks. You know what I mean?

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I do agree with that. And I think the teamwork with the other adult that was in the classroom willing to help at any minute, helping them try different strategies, and it was just really cool to watch all of that unfold, and I think I felt like it was a very synced space. That if I needed help, I could tap out [Interpreter 1] or I think if the other adult that was in the

room was starting to feel like maybe she wasn't being as successful as she wanted to in this situation, she could reach out to you [Dani Willhite], what would you do here or do you have a different strategy or you want to take over? Something like that. Everyone's ready, and it's a very secure feeling.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I agree with that.

Interpreter 2: And I think the students pick up on that, as well.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Long pause; interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: What strengths, skills, or strategies did each participant bring to the success of the lesson?

Interpreter 1: [Laughter] I think Wednesday was a really good example of the fact that we all have different strategies. We've talked about before [Interpreter 2] is really able to break down language in a way that really supports this specific student. And I think that was really evident in the lesson on Wednesday specifically. Obviously with just two students, it could be noticed a little bit more, and then I think your [Dani Willhite] skills of just being able to like . . . it's almost a little bit weird to think about as a skill, but knowing when to sit back and just watch and let things happen.

Interpreter 2 shakes head in agreement

Interpreter 1: And I think even me personally, sometimes I see somebody not be successful on the first try and I want to be like, "oh! let me try" or "here I know what could help this." but I think you're [Dani Willhite] really good at sitting back and giving that space and opportunity, that safety net of you can struggle right here. And I think you [Dani Willhite] even pointed out during the lesson to the other support staff that was with us that was struggling a little bit . . . like it's okay to struggle and it's actually really good for the student to see you struggle, because now they're seeing that it's okay, and it's normal and everybody does it sometimes. So, I think that's a skill in itself of . . . when do I step in? Because I don't want you to feel like you're alone or failing or anything, but also you can make mistakes, and you can keep trying and we can move forward. So that's definitely a skill that I appreciate.

Interpreter 2: [Laughter] So she beat me to it. That's what I was going to say, too. It's . . . you [Dani Willhite] just have a knack for allowing people to breathe and work and do their thing. And it might take a little more time for the whole process to unfold than it would for you, and you're okay with it. And it allows for growth for the other people involved in that situation, whether it's an adult or a student. And I think you've [Dani Willhite] done a really nice job of setting up that environment in the classroom as a safe environment. And so, I think in general, everyone at least especially if the students are willing to try things knowing that they might not be successful on that first try, but they're more willing to try again. And so they understand that, okay, I'm not going to give up. This is really important. I want to learn this. And so they do, and I've been in other classrooms where that isn't the case where teachers or just other adults in general are very quick to step in and say, "try this or do this instead," and I think at one point even after not being successful, you say something about techniques or strategies on there, but keep going. That kind of thing. So, it's cool.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: And I think for *your* [Interpreter 1] strengths. You're just really good at being quiet sometimes.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: And that might sound weird, but sometimes also sitting back and being quiet in a way to you can kind of quietly throw something out or just on the side . . . not in your face—just something like that. It's just very gentle and calming.

Long pause

Dani Willhite: [Question] says for each participant. Do you have any more feedback for each other?

Interpreter 1: Um . . . not necessarily and I mean I've said it so many times, but I think you [Interpreter 2] are really good at just breaking down the language in a unique way. And I think that specific student benefits greatly from it, but I appreciate that you're not too proud to know when it's like, okay, I need to break this down in a different way. And when it's like . . . ok, I'm out of ideas. Can you help me? Do you have a different idea? You know what I mean? You're [Interpreter 2] not too proud to bring in that aspect of teamwork and recognize that there is another person in this room who does the same job as you. And if you've tried everything you know how to try, you're going to be like, hey, this is what I did. it's not working. Come on. Let's figure it out together. So, yeah, I appreciate that.

Interpreter 2: In general, your work ethic. I think you have very strong ethics, and I just appreciate you [Interpreter 1].

Interpreters smile at each other.

Dani Willhite: What reflections did the participant share following the lesson regarding collaboration?

Long pause. Interpreters think quietly.

Dani Willhite: All together. That could look a lot of different ways.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I think I have not filled out a feedback on this, but I think I mentioned to you that the students have an upcoming test, and I am concerned that they're not ready yet compared to our other unit. And I think we had a conversation about that just at this time of the semester we're on our third quarter. Yeah, we're about to start the fourth quarter. I'd say it's time for those scholars [students] to have more responsibility and more accountability, and they have all of these resources available to them and they're well aware of their resources. They're very aware of the timeline of the test and I think track of setting it up for all the successes. And so, at this point it's kind of up to them as to whether or not . . . whether they do well on their test. And we talked about goals and kind of what will happen at the end after they take the test. If they meet their goals . . . so I just appreciate having conversation.

Interpreter 1: I actually want to jump back to a different question really quick. The one about during the lesson on Wednesday.

Dani Willhite: Number 11? In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement during the lesson?

Interpreter 1 looks through the list of questions.

Interpreter 1: I think maybe more so Number 8. But during . . . ok so during Wednesday, we had just finished up our first activity with the job application and going through that. We were getting ready to start our second part of the class where they were gonna start working on cutting out their organs and stuff like that. And you [Dani Willhite] took a second before that to kind of share with us that even though we had students missing that you were going to go ahead and do this and that maybe they would just miss out on points for not being present during class, and not for those who had the excused absences and stuff. And I feel like that seems like a really small thing but it's sometimes those decisions when they're not communicated, it can feel a little bit like, what do you mean we're going to go ahead and start

this big project without half the class here, you know what I mean? I think it can sometimes be challenging to process that individually when you don't know the thoughts behind moving on. So, I appreciate that you took a second to share that *this is why I'm doing this*. And I'm not saying obviously that a teacher always has to share the reason behind everything, but I do think specifically for the purposes of your research and collaboration and stuff . . . that's something that you do that I really appreciate is you [Dani Willhite] let us know, "hey, this is what I'm doing and this is why." Because sometimes without that why things aren't necessarily always as clear. *So, okay*, I know what we're doing now, but if I don't know why we're doing it, maybe I'm going to interpret it. You know what I mean? We're practicing vocabulary, but if I don't know that we're practicing it because they're going to have a signed portion of the test where they have to identify these specific signs for these specific terms, then maybe I'm not going to emphasize the specific signs. I'm going to emphasize the meaning. You know what I mean? So, I think knowing that *why* behind a decision is really helpful in our interpreting process. It's something I really appreciate. So, wanted to put that in there.

Interpreter 2: Yeah, I agree. And I'll just add on to that. I think in a sense when the scholars [students] are successful, I'll speak for myself. If the scholars [students] are working really hard and they're very successful, I feel success.

Interpreter 1: Absolutely. I agree.

Interpreter 2: And I don't know if that's right or wrong, but that's kind of how I take it. And I also take it if they're not doing well, I take a very small partial ownership for that, because I think you have to take them in and look at the . . . is the why on them because they're not studying work, they're not doing nothing? Or is it because during the lesson maybe I wasn't providing equal access or maybe I just wasn't good at my job that day? Maybe I was just doing a lousy job that day. And I know that if they lose points on their project for not working or coming to school, it's not me. I also know it's not always our place to know that but in some instances, it is really helpful too.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think it honestly affects our interpreting across our interpreting process a lot more than people really think about or know. And so, yeah, I thought it was worth mentioning because it does affect how we interpret things. which also affects student success, right? If I'm not interpreting something for the purpose that you're teaching it for, I maybe interpreting it in a different way. Maybe you're focused on the word itself, but I'm focused on the meaning. Well, you're the one teaching. So, then they're going to be tested on the word itself. They're not tested on how specifically I interpreted it. Then I think that conversation that you and [Interpreter 2] had reminded me of the conversation that you guys had after this week. Remind me of the question.

Interpreter 2: Oh, I don't remember.

Interpreter 1: Oh, this week. It's been a week!

Interpreters laugh

Interpreter 1: I think that relates to what you shared during the lesson of you sharing with us that we're almost to the end of the year.

Interpreter 2: What is related to the test?

Interpreter 1: Oh, yes! It was about the test and them not being ready. And at this point we have done a lot of collaboration to make sure that they understand what their goals are and they understand what we are going to do, and then they understand what was on them to do . . . what was the expectation for our work that we were going to put in and then their work that they were going to put in. So, I think just having that reflection for a minute that maybe they're not

going to be ready for this test, but also you said if we're talking to the students, if you said you were going to put in time to study and we said we were going to do all of these things and we did . . . we've checked all of these boxes of the things that we said we were going to do. Did you check the box that you said you were going to do? So, yeah, I think just having a second to have that reflective conversation, and again just communicating. I think sometimes it can feel like when that conversation is not had, if we were to express we feel like maybe they're not ready for this test. And sometimes the response I hear from teachers is, well, too bad. You know what I mean? Do they really just mean, too bad? No, they have all of these thoughts in their head that they tried all of these things, and it's the student's responsibility, what I mean? But what they say is, too bad. And so then it comes across as like so you don't care. What? So, I think just taking the time to say those few extra words of you're right. And this is middle school, and at some point, more effort needs to come from them than it does from us.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Long pause.

Dani Willhite: Ok, last question. How might participants apply what they learned to improve future lessons?

Interpreter 1: I almost think this week was kind of just a reminder to me that a lot can be solved with a simple conversation. I think I already expressed just the way the week started wasn't great. And so, I think I then continued into the week with lots of things going on in my mind that I think could have been solved if we would have just had a conversation the next morning. You know what I mean? And I obsessed over the fact that I felt like the students weren't going to be super successful if we were having them just draw and size these organs on their own. And I really wanted them to be successful. They were so excited about our last project, and I really wanted to see that again. That's so rewarding. And so instead of just coming to you and having a conversation about it, I think I overthought about it. I just thought about it so much and it literally could have been solved. We literally saw how it happened. I came in and I said, "hey, I had this idea." And you're like, "great. Let's do it." In 5 seconds, it could have been solved. So, I think this week was just a really good reminder to just have the dang conversation, and I think it's such a safe place to do that. Never have I come to you and said, "*hey, I wanna do this.*" And you [Dani Willhite] say, "that's stupid." You know what I mean? I think myself reflecting it was just why did you let that stress you out so much when you literally could have fixed it in 5 seconds before your day even started, but instead it affected your whole, it's just silly . . . But it's fine because next week will be better because I'll remember if there's something like that that's so easy and could be fixed so quickly just go have a dang conversation about it, I don't know. I think a lot of thoughts on this . . . just taking the time to be patient with whichever student you're working with them at their level . . . where they're at and provide them what they need so that they can continue to and then that helps them.

Appendix M: Interview 4, April 3, 2025

Interview 4

Date: 04.03.2025

Location: In-person

Interviewer: Dani Willhite

Dani Willhite: Today is April 3rd and it is our very last structured interview together. And I cannot tell you guys how much I appreciate your time and feedback and just willingness to provide important data on this topic. So, I really appreciate that. So, we're going to jump right in if you guys don't mind.

Interpreter 2: Yep.

Both interpreters shake their heads in agreement.

Dani Willhite: Number 1, what were some notable moments for you in the classroom this week?

Interpreters grin and look at each other.

Interpreter 1: I feel like this is bad, but it was a different week. The schedule was just different. I mean, we had our shorter class on Monday. [Interpreter 2] got pulled for something else during that time, so it was just me. Then most of our class was on a field trip during our class Tuesday, and then most of our class was out today. But I think still a notable moment for me was the students that were here for the class on Tuesday where they took their exam for the unit that we've been studying. I think seeing how they did on that exam specifically-our signing student-because that's who we work with the most but seeing the results of all the work that we've done collaborating and everything, but it was notable.

Interpreter 2: I agree with all of that and when the student that we support, the signing student, the one we support the most was taking her test. I think the strategy that was implemented was for her to attempt the test independently first, and then after that receive interpreting services and just to see how she would do with that. And I think for me it was really noticeable her level of confidence has really improved throughout the semester. and it's been really fun to watch. So, I think had this happened several months ago, this approach, had this happened this way, it would have been different. So, yeah.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreter 2: I agree with [Interpreter 1]. Schedules were different.

Dani Willhite: How would you describe the overall dynamic between yourself as the ASL interpreter and me as the hearing teacher of the deaf?

Interpreter 2: I think the dynamic was strong in the sense that even though our schedules did change a little bit, there was still clear communication about what would be happening and if even that changed, there was still clear communication.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I would say it's been pretty standard as to, what we've worked really hard to get to the point of just having that clear communication. This is what we're doing. This is why we're doing it.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: What challenges or successes or both have stood out to you this week?

Interpreter 2: For me I think it's just the fact that we had student absences like [Interpreter 1] already said. We had a field trip on Tuesday, and so just anytime you have

changes like that, it does change the dynamics of the classroom which just means that we need to be flexible and willing to make the changes that are necessary. But I think, even though it's a challenge, it's also a success. It does highlight, for me, the importance of collaboration and having a strong foundation in that collaboration from the beginning. I think if that foundation wasn't already set up, then things wouldn't go as smoothly as they do now because it's just kind of become the norm.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I agree with that. I think our last couple weeks, just the schedules changing is always a challenge kind of shifting what we're doing. But yeah, just the need to be flexible and understanding that there are things that happen that are out of our control, and moving forward in the way that's best for the students that we do have in the class for that time. It is the best choice is to have it proceed.

Interpreter 2: And I'll just add on to that, as well. A challenge for me on Tuesday was that, um . . . no, excuse me, Monday with shorter classes. One of the students that's in that classroom already . . . got pulled into another room and still needed interpreter services. It just wasn't what I expected when I walked into the classroom, and that's okay. But it does just again highlight I think the way that we collaborate and our ability to do it, I think. We have a pretty good setup and it's like, "hey, can you support this student for a few minutes over here?" "Sure, I'll do that." I was a little disappointed that I wasn't able to be in the classroom the whole time just because that's what I expected when we first walked into the classroom. However, the student still needed support. That's still my job. And so, I was happy to do that.

Interpreter 1: And then I think the success was that the main student that we worked that did test, did really well on her test. So that always I think feels really good as an interpreter to know that all of the work you did and prepping and communicating about the best way for this material to be relayed paid off and that learning really did happen. That's always really exciting to see.

Interpreter 2: And I think also the fact that you share with us at different times throughout the year that this is kind of like these are general goals that we're working on for all the students. However, this particular student has these goals in her IEP. This is what I'm looking for. So when I do this lesson, this is really what I'm trying to accomplish with this student versus this student or this student.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Are there any observations or thoughts that you would like to share before we dive into specific questions? Anything at all?

Interpreter 2: I just think some general thoughts or things to keep in mind is that this was such an abnormal week that I feel like some of these questions might not be applicable to how we work together or the things that we did this week. So, it's a little different than it's been in the past, but that's education.

Long pause

Dani Willhite: Anything to add?

Interpreter 2 shakes their head 'no.'

Dani Willhite: "How did the team members establish roles during the lessons?"

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I don't think there's any distinct establishment. I think [Interpreter 2] had touched on from Monday's lesson, we just kind of work together well enough that we know, we're all going to do what we can to make sure that all of our students have the access that they need and deserve. And so Monday, that looks like [Interpreter 2] leaving the classroom

to support a student in a different way while I stayed in the class. So, yeah, there wasn't any clear distinction of "I want you to do this and you to do this and this is what I'm going to do." It was more of like "all right, these are the needs and let's just go with it."

Interpreter 2: Yeah. I think just to add to that, on Tuesday, if I remember right, we did just a little bit of review before the students took the test and the two students that were in the classroom at that time . . . their needs were very different from my perspective. But we were able to communicate who to do what to accomplish what we wanted to accomplish.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake their heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. What were your initial thoughts about collaboration between the teacher of the deaf and ASL interpreters?

Interpreter 1: I don't think they've changed that much. I mean, we've done a lot of work to establish a relationship and rapport with each other. I think we're getting to the end of the year and just kind of start the week with all right, what is this week going to bring? So yeah, there is not really a big change in the initial thoughts we're getting towards the end of the year. I think we've all really just found our groove with each other and kind of know what to expect from each other.

Interpreter 2 shakes head in agreement.

Long pause

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake their heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: Okay. Were there any conflicts, or unanticipated challenges that arose during the lesson? And if so, how were they addressed?

Interpreter 1: I don't personally feel like this question is quite applicable to this week just because it wasn't really lesson oriented. It was more of a review and testing. So there were no big lessons that we did together. *Interpreter 1 looks to Interpreter 2.* Do you feel differently?

Interpreter 2: No, I agree. And I think at this point, when the students were doing their test review, they already knew the material for the most part. So, like you [Interpreter 1] said, there wasn't necessarily a lot of teaching. It was more review and reinforcing and that type of stuff.

Dani Willhite: Can you tell me what that review looked like? What happened in the class during that time?

Interpreter 1: I'm trying to remember. Sometimes it feels like so long ago. I think the signing student that we mainly support was working with another staff member in the class. And that staff member was mostly communicating independently with the student. And so for us as interpreters, it kind of looked a little bit more like backing away and just letting that direct communication happen, but also being on standby for if that staff member needed additional support with communication when the student needed clarification. But I think for us it was a little bit more hands off, and just kind of being there if something came up and was needed of us. For the beginning of the class and then I want to say towards the end of the class. the student had come and asked [Interpreter 2] to interpret the exam.

Interpreter 2: Mhm. Yeah, I agree with all of that. And for me, being on standby really just looked like obviously sitting close by, but just watching the body language of both the other adult that was helping and the student, it looks good. Are these understanding fully? Does anything need to be added on or clarified?

Dani Willhite: And that I have a follow-up question. you had mentioned a staff member was directly communicating. How is that set up? What does that look like when the interpreter shifts to It sounds like the interpreter is more observing for any communication breakdown. How is that set up? What does that look like?

Interpreter 1: Umm I mean I think it looks a little bit like what [Interpreter 2] had just explained. So, the student and staff were kind of off to the side communicating directly and then as interpreters like she was explaining we're just kind of like watching body language. We've worked with this student for a while so we tend to pick up on cues as to "I don't really know what's going on." And I think also a couple times the staff member was like, "I might need you guys." So, we were able to kind of encourage her. "We think you can do this." And then also still if there was still body language or verbal cues that there was a disconnect, then we were able to step in and assist in that way. But yeah, it really looked more of just sitting back off to a side so we're not directly in their business, but also making sure that we're kind of checking in, there's no body language that there's a huge disconnect or breakdown.

Interpreter 2: Yes. All of that. But I also think it's very important for the student that's working with the adult for them to see that we trust that communication to happen. So, we're there, but we're not there. Because I think maybe the way that they communicate looks a little bit differently than it would if you [Dani Willhite] were sitting with the student or if I was sitting with the student. And they might try a couple different approaches, but I think that's really important for both the other adult that's assisting and the student to see . . . this is life. This is how it happens. And just kind of watch that unfold and let them establish that rapport and build that trust and confidence with each other. And we're here, we're ready if needed.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think it really just showcases, I think, what I've talked about in a couple of our other interviews of it just being a safe place. The student knows that if we're there, they can trust that we'll jump in and I think they've come to know that it might not be right away like they want. There might be some tough moments where it's not just super smooth communication, but again, like [Interpreter 2] said, I think that's really important for both the other adult and the student to see that not everything happens smoothly the first time, and that's okay. But I think without the establishment of that room being a safe place for that to happen, and I think if we had set ourselves up in a way that they're in the room, but they're not actually paying attention. And if I need something, they're not actually going to be there. You know what I mean? We've shown them and really worked hard to build that trust that we're going to let this happen, and it might be a little bit bumpy, but if it gets too bumpy, like we are going to be there and we will jump in to make sure that everything is okay.

Interpreter 2: And I feel very confident that the other adult that was working with the student, if she had any doubt in their mind that there was a breakdown in communication, she would reach out to us right away.

Interpreter 1: Yeah.

Interpreter 2: So, I think in a sense we've been able to collaborate with this other adult too. It's been a great experience.

Interpreter 1: Definitely building trust within the student but also within the adults that work in the classroom. For sure.

Dani Willhite? Anything else?

Interpreters shake their heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: How did the teacher and the interpreter provide feedback to each other during the lesson, either verbal and/or non-verbally?

Interpreter 2: I can't really answer that simply because of the class structure this week.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I agree.

Dani Willhite: Ok. What norms or routines were evident in fostering collaboration during the lessons?

Interpreter 1: Not necessarily norms or routines specifically for the lesson, but just for the class as a whole. The kids come in and they know what to do. They have their normal morning routine. They rely on us reviewing the calendar together, but then aside from that, also kind of what we talked about in Number 7 is that we've set up the expectation and the norm for them that this is a safe place to learn and that means making mistakes and things maybe not going smoothly sometimes. So, I think that being able to step back and watch the other adult and that student kind of work together to get to a place where they understood each other. That was just the norm of it being a safe place to make mistakes was definitely there.

Interpreter 2: And if I'm not mistaken this week we started with new class jobs. Is that correct?

Dani Willhite shakes head in agreement.

Interpreter 2: And so the norm and the routine is for the students to come in, grab their note cards, copy their agenda from the board, and then start their class jobs. And so the students expected . . . we all expected them to follow the routine. The routines just looked a little bit different in the sense that they got new class jobs and they had to figure that out. But they knew what to do.

Interpreter 1: And they knew where to look for that information as well.

Interpreter 2: Mhm.

Dani Willhite: How did the teacher and the interpreter coordinate efforts to support student understanding and their access to language and content?

Interpreter 2: I think I kind of already answered this with another one. I should have waited until this one, so I'm not sure I have anything to add to that.

Interpreter 1: I think maybe just some of the communication that happened around the testing setup and how it was happening. I think you [Dani Willhite] were able to communicate with us, "this is what I want it to look like and this is why." So, you're able to explain, "I want the student to take this test without interpreter support first to see what they can do without it, and then go back and do it with an interpreter." So, I think that communication helped us know what was happening and know why it was happening. Again, I think to somebody who maybe didn't have the rapport and collaboration that we do, the why isn't always shared, and that can be really frustrating as an interpreter because we're not trained as teachers. We don't have that background information and always understand the process behind the teaching. And so just having that explanation is nice, but also that then helps us know how to interpret and what way we need to interpret.

Interpreter 2: I agree. And I think if you told us to let the class unfold in those steps like we did without telling us why, I think my gut reaction would be a little awkward. I think I would probably question you respectfully *why*? Because that doesn't make sense because we're not providing people access this means interpreting services they have it on their IEP, etc. And so really providing us with that why and making sure we understood it helped a lot.

Interpreter 1: Yeah. I think especially thinking about their IEP and those are the documents that we are supposed to be following. We're supposed to make sure that they have access to the accommodations on their IEP, and obviously we are one of those accommodations, and so I think without that why it's like . . . so just don't care about the IEP? What . . . I don't

understand, yeah there was no change to their IEP to my knowledge so why are we all of a sudden not providing them services. So we're not telling you don't get interpreted for the test we're just telling you try first, so you're making these connections to the English and seeing what connections were made throughout your setting and stuff . . . and then we're going to make sure you have that accommodation that allows you . . .

Interpreter 2: To compare the data that you need.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake their heads 'no.'

Dani Willhite: In what ways did teamwork enhance student engagement and learning during the lessons this week?

Long pause

Dani Willhite: Is there anything we did that you found that students then were more attentive to what was occurring in the classroom?

Interpreter 2: I think the one-on-one communication that we already talked about when the student was sitting with the other adult in the classroom, and having that direct communication was beneficial. That's what they needed at that time.

Interpreter 1: I mean, I think with it being the week that it was, them having that time, the students that were in class having that time to have more direct guidance and study time and review time . . . I think was really beneficial for them. But I think just as a whole, the students I think have come to notice and expect that we (the three of us) communicate about things, and so we're all on the same page, and also that they can ask any of us a question, but sometimes it might be redirected to someone else. And I think just from working in different settings sometimes I've noticed that if a kid comes to you with a question and you don't have the answer, you send them to someone else . . . they can tend to just kind of shut down and be like "no I'm not going around to" but I think our students have the understanding that, ok . . . "they might not know the answer but they're probably telling me to go ask the teacher because the teacher has the answer." You know what I mean? We're not just running them around for no reason. They've come to trust that we do work as a team, and there's reasons behind the way that we do things. So yeah.

Interpreter 2: I have a question too just because this week has been different with all of my classes. Did we do [student] interviews this week as well?

Dani Willhite: Yeah, yes we did on Monday.

Interpreter 1: Mhm.

Interpreter 2: Thank you. I think teamwork definitely did well with that scenario.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, that's very true. So, during the interviews on Monday, it was very much like a group effort of can you work and support this student? Can you work and support this student? This is what I'm going to do. This is what I want it to look like. Yeah, that's a good point.

Dani Willhite: Tell me more about that.

Interpreter 2: Give me a second to think about it.

Dani Willhite: Can I pause it? Would it be okay if I muted this?

Dani Willhite leaves the room and mutes the recording to allow the ASL interpreters to think and discuss this more.

Dani Willhite: Okay, for Question 11, the two ASL interpreters had additional ideas and wanted to kind of talk through the week. So, can you guys confirm that I stepped outside for you guys to have that conversation?

Interpreter 1: *thumbs up.* Yes.

Interpreter 2: Yes, thank you.

Dani Willhite: All right. Do you want me to reread the question?

Interpreter 2: I think we can see it here. So I think for Number 11 and we wanted to kind of highlight how much we did utilize collaboration. I forgot about it initially, but I think on Monday, *Interpreter 2 looks to Interpreter 1*, do you want to talk about it first or because when I showed up to the classroom I got pulled to support another student for a few minutes outside of the classroom?

Interpreter 1: Yeah. So, just kind of some background on what the class looked like that day. [Interpreter 2] got pulled with a student. We kind of started class as normal, went through their morning procedures, class jobs, that type of thing. And then the teacher had explained what we were going to do next, which was interviews for the new class jobs that would be assigned. And they had previously filled out applications and they were handed back to them. And it was explained that during an interview you typically don't have your application right in front of you. That's something that the interviewer has, and so that you need to remember what you wrote down on your paper and things like that. And so, the students had a couple minutes to look over their application, and prepare for the interview. And during that time, Dani had asked if we minded sitting one-on-one with a student, and just working through kind of what that dynamic looks like between the interviewee and the interpreter. And I think as we were doing that, that's when [Interpreter 2] and her student joined back to the class.

Interpreter 2: And so when I came back into the classroom, I was asked to sit with this student and give them a few minutes to look over their application that they filled out and kind of remember what they wrote. And then I just went through each question, sort of a mock interview, so that they weren't completely caught off guard when they actually had their interview and to also just give them some time to just sit and just have a few minutes.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, and then the interviews looked a little bit like . . . it actually ended up being another staff member that led the interview. I think Dani took notes, and then we acted as the interpreters as we are during the interview for each of those students. So definitely just a lot of teamwork in how do we support all of these different students who are kind of maybe doing different tasks at different times? Yeah, how do we make sure they all have support in what they're doing?

Interpreter 2: And I think the interview consisted of four questions and it was very much a mock scenario. What's your name? What job are you interested in? Why? What are your strengths? That kind of thing. Very short and simple, but we were able to talk about it all before it happened and have a good understanding before we started.

Interpreter 1: Sure. I think I want to note that because of our rapport and our collaboration, we were able to kind of throw in a little bit of what felt like a silly aspect of the interview. Maybe [the interviewer] not understanding how to work with an interpreter and so mistaking the interpreter as interviewee, and you could tell the kids were a little bit thrown off by that. But I just want to highlight that I think we were able to do that and it happened smoothly and effectively only because we have the rapport and relationship we do. I think if I was in another classroom and I didn't have that rapport with the teacher, I would be like . . . what are you doing? You know what I mean? You know I'm the interpreter . . . So I think it's just important to note that because of our rapport and our working relationship, we are able to kind of throw in last minute learning opportunities, and it happened smoothly and effectively because of that.

Interpreter 2: I agree and there were so many little learning opportunities that happened. I agree with all of everything you [Interpreter 2] just said. Because of how much we've already set up in terms of teamwork collaboration and communication, it was really fun. I thought it was really awesome and went really smooth.

Dani Willhite: What strengths, skills or strategy did each participant bring to the success of the lesson?

Interpreter 1: I think from my perspective your [Dani Willhite] willingness to communicate and be flexible with what's happening just in our everyday life. Obviously, this is living proof that DeafEd is just a little chaotic sometimes, and we have to just kind of go with it. Otherwise, we're just going to make it worse. Obviously changing the routine and what we had planned and everything is not super ideal . . . It's not a super fun situation, but making the best of it is what's best for the kids. And that's why we're here. So, I think your just flexibility and communication around that with us, I think I'll speak for myself, just kind of like ease my nerves a little bit. I can trust that even if something's not according to plan, I'm going to have at least a heads up before it actively happens. I think [Interpreter 2] just your flexibility of "all right, yep, going with the student. That's what we're doing." And I think it's easy for some people when that happens to just let it throw off the whole class or even the whole day. And I think you're really good at just nope, this is just what we do. We're going to go and we're going to come back and things are going to be the same. So that's I think . . . really awesome. And then obviously all the work that you do with supporting that specific student and where her language needs are, just breaking down the language and such.

Interpreter 2: Yes. I think everything that [Interpreter 1] already said about you [Dani Willhite] in terms of your strengths. Additionally, I think your willingness to take time out of your busy schedule to communicate with us really gives me confidence in that . . . I'm going to get emotional. I feel like you're gonna make me cry. [*tears up and smiles*] Gives me confidence in that class.

Interpreter 1: *laughs.* You're going to make me cry!

Interpreter 2 takes a drink.

Interpreter 1: I'll just kind of jump in on that aspect of things of your [Dani Willhite] willingness to help us be prepared. As interpreters, typically we don't know what we're walking into. You know what I mean? We don't always have that rapport and relationship with the people that we're interpreting with or for. And so we don't really know what to expect in a day. And sometimes that can mean that maybe we're not providing the best interpretation, or maybe we're not providing the best access that we could simply because we didn't have information before. And so as interpreters coming into your classroom, even if something is changing, I think we can have the confidence of knowing like . . . that, that's communicated. So even if we didn't it changed in a way and we didn't have time to prep the material that we needed to. We also have the collaboration, you know what I mean? There is going to be collaboration and there's not going to be that disconnect of we changed the lesson and now we're talking about a topic that I don't know the sign for that. Do you know what I mean? We're able to feed off of each other and be like "have you seen the sign for that?" And there's comfortability in doing that. You know what I mean? It's not for me as an interpreter, it's not like a deflating moment of I had to ask the TOD what the sign was. You know what I mean? it's not a deflating of "man, she just had to help me do my job."

Interpreter 2: Mhm.

Interpreter 1: It just is.

Interpreter 2: And I really appreciate how you will openly say to whomever, “hey, [Interpreter 2], is this how you would sign this? Because this is what I’ve seen.” And that I think is important twofold. One, it allows the kids to see that there are different ways to sign the same word. And that doesn’t mean that yours is right or mine is right. We’re just showing them different ways to sign the same thing. And also I think it makes me as an interpreter feel good that you trust me enough to openly have this conversation. You don’t think that your . . . what your degree is focused on is a little bit different than what our degree is.

Interpreter 1: A lot different. Yeah.

Interpreter 2: Yeah. Is focused on and somehow we’re able to come together, and kind of respect where we’re at and what we’ve learned, and we learn from each other because of that, because of your [Dani Willhite] willingness and your openness and your flexibility and I think we have the same approach. All these great things happen within the classroom among us as the adults, but also it benefits the students. And my experience in this classroom has not been the same experience that I have had in the past.

Interpreter 1 shakes head in agreement.

Interpreter 2: In general. I’m not saying with one specific class or one specific teacher. That’s not what I’m saying at all. I’m just saying what you [Dani Willhite] are able to create in your classroom is different and better than what I’ve been able to experience in the past. I love it.

Dani Willhite: Anything else?

Interpreters shake heads ‘no’.

Dani Willhite: What reflections did the participants share following the lesson regarding collaboration in class this week?

Interpreter 1: Yeah . . . I don’t think so because it was almost independent for the students to utilize that time to study and prepare for the exam and such. I guess maybe some opportunity for reflection came up on Monday after the interviews, not necessarily between us as adults. But I think Dani opened the floor for some reflection to be shared between the interpreters and the students of just if the interpreters have any feedback that they would like to share with the students as far as their experience, and how an actual interview process goes and such. So I think that was a cool opportunity that, we as interpreters, don’t always get a lot of times we’re there to facilitate communication, and then we’re done and then we leave. And so to have that moment of we have some time to breathe for a second, if there’s anything that you feel like would be helpful for the student to know about the interview process between an interpreter and the person being interviewed you’re welcome to share that.

Interpreter 2: And I think to add on to that, because this concept is so new for our students and there’s such a learning curve that goes with it, they’re learning from everything in that moment, in that situation. And I think for me, it was little things like since the student is still learning how to use the interpreter. And so it’s things like, okay, if your body language is showing me that you’re here, but you’re not really interested, that’s what my voice is going to sound like. So that’s the affect that I’m going to try to match. And so some of our students understand that and some of our students don’t fully understand that yet. And so it gave an opportunity to really explain that. And we don’t always get that opportunity during class time.

Interpreter 1: Yeah, I think similarly I had the student that I was working with while we were prepping, he wasn’t accessing the information that they were trying to say right away and so they were doing a lot of dramatic hand movements, and just dramatic body language and just being able to . . . I’m just letting, as the interpreter, if you were an adult doing this in an interview, the person interviewing you is going to look at you like maybe you’re a little bit crazy.

You know what I mean? And I don't think they had made the connection of this is just me trying to find the information, but outwardly showing it. I don't think they realize someone else looking at me is going to think why is she waving her hands all over the place right now? You know what I mean? And I think that connection did happen and the student was like, "ohhh, ok." And then during the interview when that moment of, "I think I need to think about what I said" . . . she still did a hand movement but it was much lower and less dramatic, and so it didn't look like she was drawing a bunch of attention to the fact that she needed a second. So I guess that was a really good moment.

Interpreter 2: Mhm. I agree. And it's all of these things that so many of our students are still really learning what using an interpreter looks like for them. They understand if they need to get the information, from the teacher. That's our job. We're getting it to them, but what they don't fully understand is that we're also relaying the student's information to the teacher. So, this was a great learning opportunity for that. Can we go back up though because I just realized as far as Number 12, I didn't say anything about you [Interpreter 1]. I got to see you work with the student that I typically support at one point and that was really cool to watch unfold because I think it was neat for me to sit back, and watch your technique and how you approach things with that particular student and I learned things from that. But I think just in general I think your [Interpreter 1] personality is pretty chill and very easy to work with. You're very flexible

Dani Willhite: How might participants apply what they learned this week to improve future lessons?

Interpreter 1: Flexibility. I think honestly if this week taught us nothing else, it taught us how important flexibility is. And I think [Interpreter 2] and I have done some reflection on our own outside of this. And I think to us sometimes it's hard to remember that that is a specific skill that not everybody has. I think for us maybe I'm just speaking for me, but it just feels natural that's what we do. What do you mean we should note that? I think just naturally just go yep this is where I'm going. Yep we're doing this and that's just kind of second nature to us, but observing just other people as they interact let alone like other interpreters as they work. That's not something that everybody necessarily understands automatically, or is able to cope with as well as we are. I mean definitely you [Dani Willhite] show it everyday. You're doing this on your plan time. We're switching class because of this. All this concept and this plan that I had, it's not working today. We don't have the attention. We don't have the focus. Whatever it might be, we're going to shift and we're going to try something else. I just think yeah, that was very relevant this week . . . With Monday [it] wasn't so much science focused. It was more life skill focused. And then Tuesday was like, all right, we really wanted it to be science focused and review focused and let's cram in some prep for this test, but half of our kids are gone, so what do we do? You know what I mean? So yeah, I think if nothing else, walking away with just that reminder that flexibility is so incredibly important. Flexibility and yeah.

Interpreter 2: I think my response actually is more applicable than 12. Sorry. It goes more back to what is one of your [Dani Willhite] strengths and that is just we have to be flexible and yes we have all of these changes, but what is the end goal? The end goal is, from my perspective, to maximize every learning opportunity that we with this time with these students. And yes, it's going to work different than what we thought it was going to look like today, but we can do this. We can work together and great things can happen and they did. It was just really cool to watch. So I think that goes . . . maybe better answers Number 12. That's one of your [Dani Willhite] strengths. You're really good at just adapting and making the best of the

situation. In terms of Number 14 though, I mean, I agree with what [Interpreter 1] said. and I'm not sure I have anything to add.

Dani Willhite: Is there anything that you would just like to share in general that you would like documented in the script or be considered in the study in general? Anything you would want to share that doesn't have to necessarily be related to any questions?

Interpreter 1: I guess just an overall general thing to note is, I personally, feel that our dynamic and collaboration and rapport is really good. You know what I mean? I think we work amazingly as a team. But I think that's only possible because of the things that each of us contribute. I think there's so many factors that go into it, but definitely our passion and our perspective and open-mindedness. I think had we been people that had vastly different personalities, or different levels of passion, I wouldn't be able to say as many positive things as I have. And I know that from working in a variety of educational settings with a variety of dynamics between the teacher of the deaf and the interpreter. So, I think just noting that each of us, and what we bring to this study, plays a really big part in the result of this study.

Interpreter 2: I agree. I do. But I'll also add I think the whole concept of what you [Dani Willhite] have established in the classroom in terms of clearly communicating things with this collaboration that you've set up with whatever interpreters are in the classroom at the time is so effective in your classroom. And I know there are times in the day that you have other interpreters in your classroom. and I would hope that the environment is the same. I do agree with [Interpreter 1] in what she said in the sense that our personalities just go really well together. And so what we have during this class time is pretty successful, but I think just in general what you're trying your goal of working collaborating with interpreters is pretty cool, and hope that once this research is published that other people who read it and will take all the good things from it and learn from it and build on it. And see that it's the approach with TODs and interpreters continues to strengthen.