16 There Is No I(Nterpreter) in Your Team

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The role of educational interpreters has been misunderstood for over 35 years. Educational interpreters do far more than simply interpret yet are also frequently not included on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Despite Supreme Court changes to the interpretation of special education, Deaf students often lack sufficient support, and to compensate, educational interpreters are adopting multiple roles without being on the IEP team. This chapter uses role theory to examine the perception of administrators and teachers about an educational interpreter's status and perceptions of who is responsible for the education of Deaf students. Findings indicate that there is a significant lack of agreement on the educational interpreters' status, creating a negative role conflict for educational interpreters. In addition, the ambiguity of the role of educational interpreters and about who is responsible for the education of the Deaf student also creates a role conflict for educational interpreters. The resultant role ambiguity and role conflict create a multitude of role expectations for educational interpreters that simply exceed their capacity to enact. Educational interpreters are peers but are not. Educational interpreters are not responsible for the education of deaf students, but they are. Far from the simple notion of providing a free appropriate public education, educational interpreters play a vital role that goes beyond simply meeting the essential communication needs of the Deaf student and absolutely need to be included on the IEP team.

Historical Overview: Interpreters in Mediated Education

With the implementation of Public Law 94–142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, more than 45 years ago, Deaf children have predominantly transitioned to receiving their education along with nondisabled students in public schools. As a result, more than 91% of Deaf children attend regular public schools for the entire, or part of, the school day (Office of Special Education Programs, 2016; Shaver et al., 2014). Later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), the law requires the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and is based on the unique needs of the child in a least restrictive environment (LRE). As reauthorized in 2004, educational interpreters were deemed related service providers (§300.34(c)(4)). (See Chapter 17 for a more detailed explanation of the history of the IDEA).

Recent Supreme Court decisions have fundamentally adjusted the definition of a FAPE. In 1982, in *Board of Education v. Rowley*, an educational interpreter determined, after two weeks of observation, that Amy Rowley, a Deaf child of Deaf parents, performed adequately in a classroom without the use of an interpreter in all her classes. Although we do not know the particulars about the educational interpreter, the U.S.

District Court presentation of the case indicates "several members of the school administration prepared for Amy's arrival by attending a course in sign-language interpretation" (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982). Although it is unclear whether one of these administrators was the educational interpreter, given *when* the case was, interpreter programs were often only two weeks long with no training in education or educational interpreting. Amy's parents later requested an interpreter, because she "misses a substantial part of what goes on in her classroom" (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982) and asserted that under the IDEA, an interpreter would be an "appropriate" accommodation.

The U.S. District Court case reports the Rowleys were denied their request for an educational interpreter because, according to an intendent state examiner, "Amy was achieving educationally, academically, and socially" without such assistance (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982). The District Court overturned the lower court and stated that "Amy understands considerably less of what goes on in class than she could if she were not deaf" and thus "is not learning as much, or performing as well academically, as she would without her handicap" (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982). This disparity between Amy's achievement and her potential led the court to decide that she was not receiving a "free appropriate public education," which the court defined as "an opportunity to achieve her full potential commensurate with the opportunity provided to other children" (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982).

The operative concept is that the District Court was advocating for Amy's potential. Ultimately, the case ended up in the Supreme Court to clarify the definition of an appropriate public education. In their decision, the Court held

> the intent of the Act was more to open the door of public education to handicapped children on appropriate terms than to guarantee any particular level of education . . . We conclude that the "basic floor of opportunity" provided by the act consists of access to specialized instruction and related services which are individually designed to provide educational benefit to the child. (Forte, 2017)

In the dissenting opinion, Justice White argued that the purpose of the Act defines special education to mean

> specifically designed instruction, at no cost to parents or guardians, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child. . . ." § 1401(16) . . . and Amy Rowley, without a sign-language interpreter, comprehends less than half of what is said in the classroom—less than half of what normal children comprehend. This is hardly an equal opportunity to learn, even if Amy makes passing grades. (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982)

This is significant in that it asks the education system to look at a student's potential in spite of just moving from grade to grade levels. Nonetheless, the *Rowley* case found that all disabled children were entitled to access to an education that was a benefit but did not have to maximize the potential of the child. The analogy applied to this notion is that schools must provide a serviceable Chevy not a Cadillac to provide a FAPE.

Thirty years later (2016), the Supreme Court modified the precedent of an "adequate program of education to all eligible children" if the child's IEP sets out an educational

program that is "reasonably calculated to enable the child to receive educational benefits" (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 2017, p. 1). In *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, Endrew's parents argued their autistic son's education had stalled and that his IEP was not challenging enough. Disagreeing with the IEP Team, his parents placed him in a private school, and, evidently, Endrew flourished, so his parents asked for their private school tuition to be covered because the district IEP was not calculated to provide him with educational benefit. Douglas County argued that Endrew was receiving *some* educational benefit, which was the standard prescribed in Rowley.

The Supreme Court noted that an IEP is not a form document but rather a plan for pursuing academic and functional advancement thereby designed after careful consideration of the student's current level of achievement and potential for growth and should be more than a de minimus education. In their judgment, Chief Justice Roberts adds:

> When all is said and done, a student offered an educational program providing "merely more than *de minimis*" progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all. For children with disabilities, receiving instruction that aims so low would be tantamount to "sitting idly . . . awaiting the time when they were old enough to 'drop out.' " (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 2017, p. 16)

In other words, IEP goals must be designed to provide more than minimal educational benefit and must be "appropriately ambitious in light of [a student's particular] circumstances" (Osborne, Jr. & Russo, 2017). This notion puts an end to the Chevy versus Cadillac analogy.

Individualized Education Program Team: Mediators of Mediated Education

The IEP team (see Chapters 5 and 17), at a minimum, consists of the child's parents, a general education teacher, a special education teacher (teacher of the deaf), a district administrator, individuals who can address instructional implications of evaluation results (often a school psychologist) and "at the discretion of the parent of the agency, the student (if appropriate) and other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related service personnel as appropriate" (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* 20 U.S.C. § 300, 2004). Each member of the IEP Team contributes some/their own knowledge and professional background and expertise on the student's communication access and needs. However, without any daily insight or training into Deaf education, interpreting, and mediated educations, it stands to reason that the general education teacher, the district administrators, school psychologists, and parents have no ability to make such assessments. And the special education teacher or teacher of the deaf often spends very little time with the Deaf student. Educational interpreters, however, as related service providers, are with Deaf students for the vast majority of each school day. They should likewise be expected to contribute information about the student's language/communication needs and how the student is functioning with an interpreter. Educational interpreters provide vital information on a student's language and chosen mode of communication—this, of

course, with the caveat that they are providing input that they are trained, qualified, and certified to offer. The conundrum is that most educational interpreters, although possibly qualified at some level to interpret, are rarely trained, qualified, or certified as language, education, or child development specialists.

Despite this lack of expertise, on the one hand, and lack of contact, on the other, the IEP goals are to be articulated by the IEP team and must consider the communication needs of the Deaf student. Although "the provision of FAPE is paramount, and the individual placement determination about LRE is to be considered within the context of FAPE" (Forte, 2017, p. 1), the frequent result is that the communication and related needs of a Deaf child are not adequately met and FAPE is not provided; this cannot be considered the LRE for that child (Musgrove, 2011; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 1992).

To this day, there remains concern that some local education agencies are actually violating the Deaf student's right to a FAPE if and when they place students into general education classrooms without considering the related services and communication needs. Again, not meeting the communication needs of a Deaf student is "tantamount to sitting idly . . . awaiting the time when" (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 2017, p. 16) a Deaf student will drop out or just be passed along in the education system without making a sincere effort to provide any educational benefit. Such decisions are made by the IEP team.

Interpreters in Educational Settings

Sadly, Deaf students are "often dumped in classrooms without support and their language, communication, and social needs cannot be met in a public-school environment" (Reed, Antia, and Kreimeyer, 2008, p. 485) by their IEP team decisions. Classrooms are complex learning environments (Schick, 2008; Smith, 2010, 2013; Winston, 1990, 1994, 2001, 2004, 2015) with an array of factors impacting a students' ability to learn and be successful. Simply having an interpreter in the classroom does not ensure full access (Antia, 2007; Russell, 2014; Winston, 1994, 2015). Ramsey (2004) found that administrators viewed "interpreters as a means of providing equal access, interpreters are naïvely seen as the end itself" (p. 207).

However, despite the fact that having an interpreter in the classroom does not assure full access, interpreters are placed in such complex learning environments, with few skills other than interpreting, and expected to assure "full access." While interpreting, they may often modify the interpretation on the basis of their assessment of the students' language and background, provide visual augmentation (drawing pictures, taking notes), or reduce the content and/or clarifying information by paraphrasing and summarizing information (Smith, 2010, 2013; Chapter 10). And these behaviors occur only during times actually designated as interpreting time and task, for which they might be expected, on the basis of demonstrated qualifications, to be competent.

Beyond the actual interpreting space and role, they are also expected to provide tutoring services, teach sign language to non-Deaf students, do clerical work, assist students with homework, make teaching materials, and perform some teacher functions such as grading assignments (Jones, 1993), all while they are expected to be flexible, dedicated, have a positive attitude (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001; Yarger, 2001).

In addition, educational interpreters are preparing materials, clarifying instructions and directions, ensuring personnel are informed of the students' progress, acting as a liaison between teachers and providing direct instruction (Antia, 1999; Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001; Fitzmaurice, 2017; Lawson, 2012, Chapter 12)—in other words, being the Deaf students' friend, teacher, mentor, or even parent (Oliva & Risser Lytle, 2014). So much so, Lawson (2012) found educational interpreters made many decisions on the basis of their understanding of the student and what is most important in that moment. Despite having *no training* in pedagogy, educational interpreters are often teaching Deaf students without the IEP team's knowledge (Fitzmaurice, 2017; Lawson, 2012, Chapter 12; Chapter 10)—often more than they are actually interpreting. In other words, educational interpreters are forced to adopt a role normally assigned to teachers without the knowledge of teachers or administrators (Fitzmaurice, 2017) or parents. This is not new but has been a documented practice over the last 35 years (Antia & Kreimeyer, 2001; Hurwitz, 1995; Jones, 1993; LaBue, 1998; Ramsey, 1997, 2004; S. Smith, 1998; Taylor & Elliott, 1994; Winston, 1985, 1990, p. 194; Yarger, 2001) with a few nonempirically derived role descriptions (see Chapter 14).

Despite all of this, Beaver, Hayes, Luetke-Stahlman (1995) found many teachers do not view educational interpreters as educational partners but, rather, tend to assume that educational interpreters are solely responsible for the Deaf student. Teachers rely heavily on the educational interpreters for student information sourcing (Chapter 13) and depend on their expertise to make decisions regarding the Deaf student, all with no opportunity for the teacher and interpreter to discuss goals, teaching style, student needs and negotiate the interpreter's role (Lawson, 2012, Chapter 12). Luckner and Ayantoye (2013) note that teachers of the Deaf preparation programs do not teach their students sufficient professional knowledge and skills to deal with the multitude of heterogeneous students or how to work collaboratively with general education teachers and educational interpreters (see Chapter 13 for suggestions to address this).

Yet the perceptions of educational interpreters as nonteam members abound even after so many years. In their national survey of 1,615 educational interpreters, Johnson et al. (2018) found that although 78% of educational interpreters have access to the Deaf students' IEP, only 59% attend the IEP team meetings—with only 40% of educational interpreters being able to provide input to the IEP team. The remaining 19% of educational interpreters merely provide a written report to the IEP team before the meeting. Chapters 5 and 17 mirror these findings yet find that 88.4% of educational interpreters are asked to share their input about the Deaf students' progress outside of the team meetings. Again, the notion of educational interpreters being relied on for "expertise" and information sourcing about the Deaf student (Chapter 13) but not members of the team remains a plague to this day. Johnson et al. (2018) also note that educational interpreters are providing significant additional support as a related service provider to guide Deaf students in meeting the same outcomes as their hearing peers. Because they spend the most time with the Deaf students they work with, they perhaps best know the students they interpret for each and every day yet struggle with not being invited to IEP team meetings. As a critical piece of a Deaf student's education, interpreters, who know the Deaf student the best, overwhelmingly request (need) to be part of the IEP planning (Johnson et al., 2018) to detail the interpreting needs and

interpreter challenges in the classroom and (if qualified) other aspects of a mediated education (e.g., child language development, revision of materials).

In sum, educational interpreters are viewed as unofficial information sources and minders of Deaf students in a variety of areas in which they have demonstrated no qualifications and, at the same time, are denied access to IEPs in regard to the qualifications they may have, specifically, about interpreting and strategies for mediated educations through interpreting. As such, despite having the most exposure to the Deaf student's daily success and struggles and being in a position to offer genuine insight into the Deaf students' abilities and potential, educational interpreters are broadly considered not to be members of the educational team. Instead, they are excluded from the "team," while, undoubtedly, they are making a multitude of decisions about the Deaf student every minute, of every hour, of every school day—without being qualified to do such—and without the opportunity to share that with the IEP team.

Role Theory

Rooted in sociology, psychology, and anthropology (Biddle, 1986), role theory recognizes that individuals hold a variety of positions with expectations of the rights, duties, norms, and behaviors of themselves and of others (Biddle, 1986; Major, 2003) and argues that role senders have their own perceptions of role occupants (Biddle, 1986) and convey role expectations by way of explicit and implicit communication. One factor in role theory includes role ambiguity if there is a lack of clarity or disagreement about roles (Hardy & Conway, 1988; Major, 2003). Role ambiguity is prevalent when there is a lack of a clear definition of the expectations, requirements, or methods to complete job tasks (Rizzo et al., 1970). Role ambiguity reduces accountability for performance, produces negative attitudes, significantly diminishes performance and effectiveness, and adds to employee anxiety, dissatisfaction, and lower performance (Aydintan & Simsek, 2017). Role conflict arises as a result of role ambiguity when "incompatible roles are projected on the role occupant. In meeting one set of expectations, the role occupant is unable to meet the expectations of another group" (Brookes et al., 2007, p. 150). In other words, role conflict arises if a person experiences pressures within one role that are incompatible with the pressures that arise within another, particularly if the position requires abstract and critical thinking and decision-making (Glissmeyer et al., 2007; Kopelman et al., 1983; Menon & Aknilesh, 1994; Rizzo et al., 1970). Merton (1968) found that role conflict will cause some people to distance themselves from certain role expectations altogether and negatively affects a worker's self-efficacy, or belief in their own competency to perform a specific task (Chebat & Kollias, 2000; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Jex & Gudanowski, 1992).

Role conflicts may also create a role overload (Hardy & Conway, 1988) when the competing demands of a role exceed the individual's capacity to undertake the role "due to limitations of time, skill level, education, or the like" (Brookes et al., 2007, p. 151). For example, the expectation for an educational interpreter to reconstruct *all* classroom content with a student who has significant language delays. The consequence of role overload includes lower productivity, tension, anxiety, dissatisfaction, higher stress levels, lower creativity, withdrawal from professional group, overall poor work performance, and higher burnout (Brookes et al., 2007; Iroegbu, 2014; Tang & Chang,

2010; Tubre & Collins, 2000; Wang'eri & Okello, 2014). Role overload among teachers contributes to negative effects on students, who have a poor classroom experience with such teachers and lower passing rates on high stakes. In other words, role conflict is associated with negative psychological, physical, and behavioral outcomes.

With an appreciation of how a FAPE and LRE should be designed for Deaf students and with a clear understanding of the shift in perspective for special education, role theory can be used as a backdrop to determine the system expectations and structure for educational interpreters' work on the IEP team. IEP teams should be structured with the educational interpreter as part of the team, yet empirical and rhetorical reports suggest that this is most often not the case. In light of *Endrew F.* and moving Deaf students to more learning goals that are *appropriately ambitious,* it is time for a fundamental examination of why there is no I(nterpreter) on the team. It would then be appropriate to consider preparing educational interpreters to be qualified to fulfill many of the expected roles—and whether or not those expected roles are even appropriate for one person. Without the *entire* team at the table, how can the system make any assurances of appropriate programming and placement leading to a Deaf student's success?

Methodology

As part of a larger study, 15 administrators and teachers were interviewed to collect information on their perceptions of the role of an educational interpreter. Each participant had experience working with educational interpreters, and each video-recorded interview was transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and double-checked for accuracy by the researcher and a third party. According to the *American Sociological Association Code of Ethics* (1999), all personal identifiers of research participants were removed to mask individual identities (p. 13). In all, participant interviews generated 316 minutes (5:17:00) of data, and transcript data was iteratively coded using Nvivo, a qualitative analysis software program that allows selected excerpts to be marked, organized, and categorized into thematic categories. Initial coding used an a priori approach based on role theory focusing on word repetitions, key words in context, and indigenous categories specific to public schools. Next, using axial coding, several latent themes were categorized into major role theory notions supported.

Using these major categories, nine administrators and nine teachers responded to a questionnaire about their perceptions on the role of the educational interpreter. This quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, using a descriptive statistics approach. Each statement from the questionnaire was coded according to role metaphor responses of the participant. The quantitative findings were iteratively reanalyzed against the qualitative interview findings to triangulate the overarching themes until a final reanalysis and interpretation.

Findings

Educational Interpreters' Status

As seen in Figure 1, all district (column 1) and school (column 2) administrators perceive the educational interpreter as subordinate to teachers. Teachers (columns 3 and 4), however, have a mix of perceptions related to the educational interpreter's status.

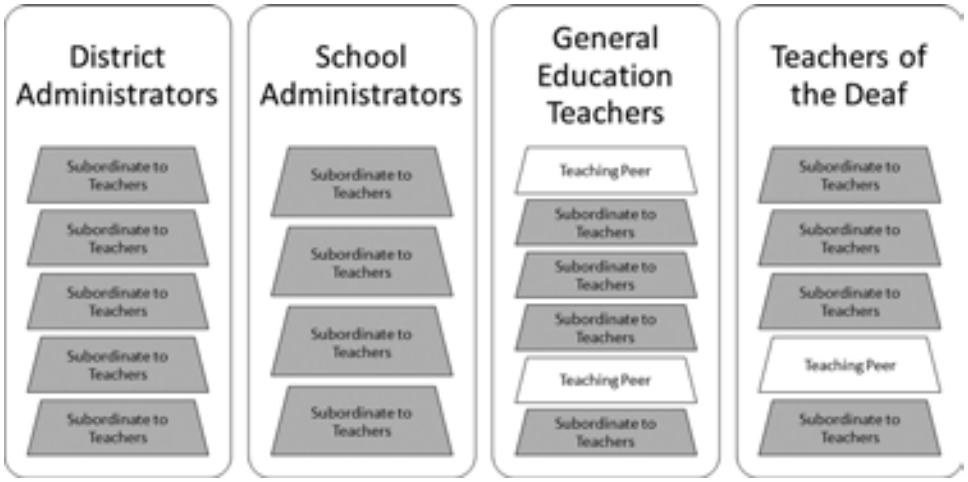

Figure 1 Role Ambiguity of Educational Interpreters' Status

Most teachers view the educational interpreter as subordinate to them. However, some view the educational interpreter as a teaching peer. For example,

During an interview, one teacher of the deaf (column 4) contrasts the educational interpreters' status with that of a teaching peer working as a colleague to support the learning of the Deaf student. This tendency also closely aligns with one specific district and is likely a by-product of how the educational interpreter has enacted their own role space in that district.

Despite a lack of training about educational interpreters (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013), with one exception, teachers of the deaf are committed to the perception that educational interpreters are subordinate to them (Simeoni, 1998). Many teachers of the deaf are de facto supervisors of educational interpreters.

Who Is Responsible for the Deaf Students' Education?

An examination of the overarching question of the educational interpreters' role space in terms of who is responsible for a Deaf students' education also reveals that some disagreement (Hardy & Conway, 1988; Major, 2003) and role ambiguity is found among members of the same constituent group.

Role ambiguity for educational interpreters related to who is responsible for the education of the Deaf student is again caused by the different perceptions of district administrators, school administrators, general education teachers, and even teachers of the deaf. Figure 2 details the different perceptions of who is responsible for the education of Deaf students by each constituent group.

Many district (column 1) and school (column 2) administrators share the view that the teacher of the deaf is responsible for the Deaf students' education. A single district administrator (column 1) suggests that such responsibilities devolve on the entire IEP team. Lastly, *all* general education teachers (column 3) and *most* teachers of the deaf (column 4) consider the educational interpreter to be responsible for the Deaf students' education. Only one teacher of the deaf indicated that the responsibility is her own.

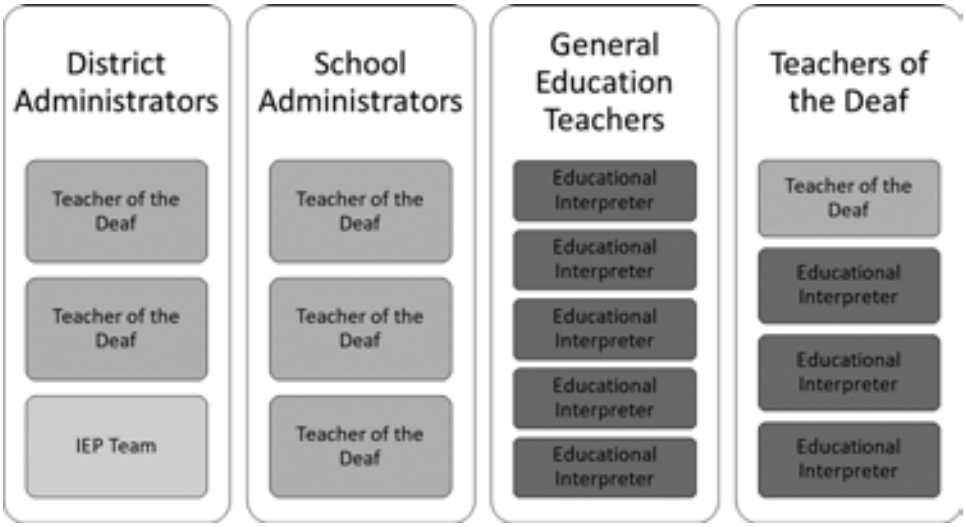

Figure 2 Role Ambiguity on Who Is Responsible for the Deaf Students' Education

The differences between the different administrators and the teachers are clear. It appears that nearly every constituent group passes the responsibility of Deaf students' education to the next layer within the educational system. District and school administrators shifted the focus to the teachers, whereas the teachers tend to delegate that to the educational interpreter.

Teachers of the deaf similarly rely on the educational interpreter to keep them informed of what is happening in the general education classroom. Rather than meeting with the general education teachers to determine the Deaf students' performance, the teachers of the deaf expect educational interpreters to be responsible for monitoring the students' performance and keeping them updated. This is a passive transfer of responsibility of the education of Deaf students to the educational interpreter. Such a lack of clarity and disagreement about which constituent group is responsible for Deaf students' education causes role space ambiguity (Hardy & Conway, 1988; Major, 2003; Rizzo et al., 1970) for educational interpreters.

Discussion

As individuals enact their role, they also assume the related responsibilities for that role. Just as physicians are responsible for the care of their patients or drivers are responsible for the safety of their passengers, each administrator and teacher in the education system enacts a role with certain responsibilities. Most roles in the education system carry well-defined task structures that specify the duties and responsibilities associated with that role space. For example, the role of teachers obliges them to assume responsibility for their students and perform in certain ways toward the students they serve. With role ambiguity and no consistent model to formalize the status or role of educational interpreters, an adhocracy system is implemented to manage the uniqueness of the situation (Conway, 1988; Tubre & Collins, 2000).

With the prevalence of role ambiguity related to status, educational interpreters often experience an inferior status. Despite their standing as a related service provider, the dominant perception is that educational interpreters are subordinate to teachers. In this vein, there are no role conflicts in the perception of the educational interpreters' status between administrators, because educational interpreters are predominantly viewed as subordinate to administrators. Yet there are some general education teachers and teachers of the deaf who believe that educational interpreters enact a role space like that of peer to teachers. The role conflict manifests itself when an educational interpreter works with one teacher who views the educational interpreter's role space to be a peer, yet the other teachers view the educational interpreter as a subordinate. Similar is the case of an interpreter working with a teacher of the deaf who perceives the educational interpreter as a peer, whereas the general education teachers see the same interpreter as a subordinate.

Because of conflicting perceptions of status, the educational interpreter's behavior is forced to vary when working with different teachers or administrators within the system. As teachers and administrators "communicate explicitly and implicitly their expectations and standards of behaviors for others" (Tubre & Collins, 2000, p. 157), any violations of expectations are deviant (Hardy, 1988). The educational interpreter in these situations cannot simultaneously enact role space expectations as a collaborative peer and a subordinate without one group perceiving such a role status violation as deviant. The lack of agreement on the educational interpreters' status creates another role conflict with conflicting status expectations.

District and school administrators believe Deaf students are the responsibility of teachers of the deaf (as might be expected). However, with rare exceptions, general education teachers and teachers of the deaf do not perceive their role as accepting responsibility for the education of Deaf students. They, perhaps unconsciously, assign that responsibility to the educational interpreter. For example, general education teachers tend to the non-Deaf students, but the educational interpreter is responsible for "taking care" of the Deaf student. Or teachers of the deaf will rely on the educational interpreter to be responsible for what happened in general education classes so they would know what to do with the Deaf student.

The ambiguity over the role of educational interpreters and who is responsible for the education of the Deaf student also creates a role conflict for educational interpreters. Given the dominant perception of educational interpreters as subordinate to teachers, an educational interpreter will experience a role conflict because it is impossible to assume the responsibility for the education of a student.

Role overload is the product of an individual's limited capacity to enact a role (or several divergent role expectations) because of limitations of time, skills, or education (Brookes et al., 2007). The role conflict for educational interpreters arises partly because administrators and teachers experience their *own* role overload in that the demands of their position exceed their capacity because of limitations of skills or education (Brookes et al., 2007). In other words, administrators and teachers with no experience or training on working with educational interpreters experience a role overload in that they are expected to supervise educational interpreting services and Deaf students. This causes a role overload for administrators and teachers.

Likewise, teachers have no experience and little training on the educational interpreter's role. And teachers of the deaf are assigned supervisory responsibilities of educational interpreters in each district but have no training in that area (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013). None of the administrators and teachers have the capacity to clearly detail the role space of the educational interpreter (Hardy & Conway, 1988) and experience their own role overload because of a lack of skills or education in the area.

The resultant role ambiguity and role conflict create a multitude of role expectations for educational interpreters that simply exceed their capacity to enact (Hardy & Conway, 1988). Educational interpreters are peers yet not. Educational interpreters are not responsible for the education of Deaf students, yet they are. This confusion is perplexing for educational interpreters, Deaf students, and the system. Educational interpreters are simply not qualified to pursue the multitude of responsibilities assigned formally or informally to them. Over the years, many researchers have shared alarm at the perception of educational interpreters as experts in Deaf education, when they are simply not.

Conclusions and Recommendations

With the fundamental idea that Deaf students no longer deserve a de minimus education, we need to eliminate role ambiguity and role conflicts and to ensure the whole team is involved in providing an appropriately ambitious education for Deaf students. As related service providers, with expertise regarding the student, educational interpreters *are* members of the IEP team. Rather than being tied down to the simple notion of providing a free appropriate public education, the use of an educational interpreter must move above and beyond considerations of meeting the essential communication needs of the Deaf student.

However, it must be restated that national minimum qualifications and educational background (Johnson et al., 2018) are needed for each educational interpreter and for the multitude of other people identified to fill IEP team roles. In K–12, rarely can any interpreter provide equal access through interpreting alone; unqualified educational interpreters cannot provide meaningful access and do more harm than good (see Chapter 1). Even the Department of Education recognizes that many school systems feel compelled to place anyone who "can sign" with Deaf students in an attempt to meet the goals of the students' IEP. Again, "any setting that does not meet the communication and related needs of a child who is deaf . . . does not allow for the provision of FAPE, cannot be considered the LRE for that child" (United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 1992). In 2003, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education representative concluded that "achievement is limited when students do not have access to qualified interpreters" (Johnson, 2004). Even the best educational interpreters cannot ensure full access (Antia, 2007; Reed et al., 2008: Russell, 2014; Winston, 1994). Unqualified and undereducated educational interpreters cannot meet the communicative needs of a Deaf child. Sadly, many states still lack minimum standards for those working as educational interpreters. As of 2014, nearly 33% of states have either an EIPA 3.0 or absolutely no minimum standard (Johnson et al., 2015) for educational interpreters. This is a travesty and cannot continue.

Yet we note in this study that educational interpreters are not considered peers (Beaver et al., 1995) and are perceived to be subordinate to teachers. As seen in these findings, many teachers inappropriately assign responsibility for the Deaf student's education to the educational interpreter (Beaver et al., 1995) and use educational interpreters as sources of information about Deaf students (Chapter 13; Fitzmaurice, 2017).

However, teachers have no training on working with educational interpreters (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013) and are ill-equipped to supervise educational interpreters (Taylor, 2004). These supervisor–subordinate dynamics exacerbate the nonpeer perception.

In addition to professional credentials evidencing the ability to interpret, Johnson et al. (2018) strongly recommend that each and every educational interpreter graduate from a four-year program specializing in K–12 educational interpreting as related personnel. What is missing from this recommendation is specific mention of curricular requirements in such programs to move beyond simply interpreting skills but to address the many competencies and expectations—broadly referenced as experts in educational interpreting.

Educational interpreters do far more than simply interpret (see Chapter 14), yet they are frequently not included on the IEP team, so much so that Deaf students are often dumped in classrooms without sufficient support (Reed et al., 2008) and educational interpreters, working in isolation, are adopting roles normally assigned to teachers without informing the IEP team (Chapter 12; Fitzmaurice, 2017; Lawson, 2012, Smith, 2010). It is the entire team that is responsible for the education of Deaf students (Beaver et al., 1995), not just the educational interpreter.

Highly qualified and well educated educational interpreters who are considered peers, work as part of the education team, with every team member accepting responsibility for the education of the Deaf student is the only way to ensure that we move beyond de minimus education for Deaf students. Put the I(nterpreter) in your Team.

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