



*South Carolina*

# **EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETING CENTER**

## **Improving Your Educational Interpreting Competencies White Paper**

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Educational Interpreters are always working on improving their interpreting competencies. Attending related workshops provides educational interpreters with the tools to improve their competencies but simply sitting in a workshop as a passive participant will not improve an educational interpreter's skills.

And some educational interpreters believe just by taking an interpreting test repeatedly will yield better scores. There is ample evidence to suggest this is simply not true. In fact, memorizing the text itself would not make interpreting competencies improve. This is no longer possible as there is a required one year waiting period before any educational interpreter can re-test. Other interpreters believe they can improve their interpreting skills by going to work every day. However, the road to expert is not a consequence of more experience (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch- Römer, 1993).

For an educational interpreter to improve their competencies they must attend workshops to learn how to address specific discrete skills, seek out mentoring (both language and interpreting) and do some deliberate practice or homework.

Deliberate practice includes activities designed to improve a very specific aspect of performance. Deliberate practice is used by musicians (Ericsson, 1993: Sloboda, Davidson, Howe, & Moore, 1996), chess players (Charness, Krampe & Mayr, 1996), athletes (Starkes.

Deakin, Allard, Hodges, & Hayes, 1996) and interpreters (Pochhacker, 1994; Hoffman, 1997; Ericsson, 2001; Patrie, 2004; Tiselius, 2018;). Again, deliberate practice is not just going to work and interpreting every day (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch- Römer, 1993).

The way to improve competencies using deliberate practice is to:

1. Set specific goals
2. Work on specific goals weekly
3. Self-Assessment of Progress (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; McDonald & Boud, 2003; Patrie, 2004; Lew, Alwis & Schmidt, 2010; Fitzmaurice, 2020)
4. Discuss with mentors (as needed)

When calculating goals, remember to select a maximum of 2-3 goals at any given time. Too many goals are too overwhelming. Savvy Educational Interpreters use previous EIPA results to determine their short-term goals. However, not all competencies develop in the alphabetic order on the EIPA Diagnostic Center results.

We note skill domains generally develop in the following order:

## Specific Domains & EIPA Competencies

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### **Vocabulary**

- III A: Amt of Vocabulary
- III I: Production of Numbers
- III D: Vocabulary Consistent
- III B: Signs Made Correctly
- III C: Fluency/Rhythm

### **Fingerspelling**

- III F: Production of Fingerspelling
- III G: Spelled Correctly
- III H: Appropriate Use of Fingerspelling

### **Body Use**

- I E: Sentence Types
- I I: Location
- I H: Compare & Contrast
- I G: Verb Directionality/Pronominals

### **Simple Language & Placement**

- I D: Sentence Boundaries
- I A: Stress/Emphasis
- I B: Affect/Emotion
- I E: Sentence Types

### **Complex Grammar & Space**

- I C: Register
- III E: Key Vocabulary
- I I: Use of Classifiers

### **Narrative Shifts**

- I F: Non-Manual Markers
- IV A: Eye Contact/Movement
- IV G: Indicates who is speaking

### ***Discourse Mapping & Cohesion***

- IV B: Whole Message (E-S)
- IV C: Whole Message (S-E)
- IV D: Processing Time (E-S)
- IV E: Processing Time (S-E)
- IV F: Discourse Mapping

In other words, we do not suggest looking at your EIPA results and automatically begin working on your lowest scoring competency, rather select the most developmentally appropriate skills (see step 1), deliberately practice those (see step 2), measure your progress-

are you getting better? (see step 3), and either move to the next developmentally appropriate goal or discuss with mentors (step 4).

We strongly recommend for the development of Roman II competencies, all Educational Interpreters seek out language mentors in their local Deaf communities. For all other competency development, please feel free to reach out to SCEIC staff to assist with your professional development plan. Through this approach, Educational Interpreters improve their overall competencies and EIPA scores leading to better learning outcomes for Deaf students.

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