

News from the NCIEC Deaf Interpreting Work Team: Deaf Interpreting Institute, Proposed Domains and Competencies and CDI Task Force

NCIEC Deaf Interpreting Work Team

In our July 2009 *VIEWS* article, we invited readers to attend our presentation at the Deaf Caucus Gala during the 2009 RID National Conference. Following is a recap of the information we presented. For those interested in viewing the full PowerPoint presentation, please visit “The Learning Center” tab of diinstitute.org.



*Back Row-LtoR: Dr. James Penny, Phara G. Rodrigue, Judith Gilliam, Cynthia Napier, Cathy Cogen, Carole Lazorisak, Kirk Vandersall, Clay Nettles
Front Row-LtoR: Deborah Peterson, Lillian Garcia, Dr. Judith Mounty, Jimmy Beldon*

deaf, hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind) and particular extra-linguistic knowledge of language and critical to effective deaf interpreting. These concepts are described in more detail on the DII Web site where we have posted the proposed domains and competencies. We invite comments from deaf interpreters and interpreters who work with deaf interpreters.

What is *diinstitute.org*?

It was a great privilege to launch our new National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) Web site, Deaf Interpreting Institute (DII), with a roomful of deaf interpreters attending the Deaf Caucus Gala.

DII is a learning, sharing and networking site for deaf interpreters, interpreters who work with deaf interpreters, deaf interpreting educators and mentors, interpreting education program faculty and administrators and people who use the services of deaf interpreters. DII is designed to address the need often expressed by deaf interpreters for a professional practice community, learning opportunities and public education on the role, function and value of deaf interpreters.

The following are currently available on the DII Web site:

- Results of a national survey of deaf interpreters and focus groups of deaf interpreters and deaf interpreting educators;
- A pilot case study with commentary;
- Proposed domains and competencies for deaf interpreting;
- Summaries of the Critical Issues in Deaf Interpreting Forum 2006 presentations; and
- Resources including an annotated

bibliography on deaf interpreting, links to documents on deaf interpreting and the law, links to national consortium products and links to relevant organizations.

The site’s “first language” is ASL with links to English text. It is a work in progress, so expect ongoing additions and enhancements with time. Your comments and expressions of what you would like to see on the site—what would support your deaf interpreting-related work—will ensure that the site meets the needs of our stakeholders.

Proposed Domains and Competencies

One of the most important objectives of the Deaf Interpreting Work Team has been to describe the specialized domains and competencies required for deaf interpreting, as distinguished from those expected of generalist interpreters. Through the studies we conducted, we have arrived at four areas of interpreting practice in which we propose that the deaf interpreter has distinctive responsibilities, knowledge and skill sets: consumer assessment, language foundations, interpreting processes and professional development. We also describe certain formative experiences that our studies reveal are common among deaf interpreters and that imbue deaf interpreters with both knowledge of language (ASL and other forms of communication present among individuals who are

CDI Task Force

At the request of RID, the NCIEC convened a new task force charged with reviewing and finding solutions for the low pass rate on the CDI knowledge test. The new task force comprises representatives of the NCIEC Deaf Interpreting Work Team and NAD with support of consultants and NCIEC and RID staff. Members representing NCIEC are Jimmy Beldon, CDI; Lillian M. Garcia, CDI; Carole Lazorisak, CDI; Cynthia Napier, CDI; and Deborah Peterson, CDI. Judith Gilliam, CDI, represents NAD.

Cathy Cogen serves as the administrative liaison to NCIEC, Judith Mounty is the consultant on issues of testing deaf adults and Kirk Vandersall of Arroyo Research Services is the consultant on testing and assessment.

Consultants for the team met in April 2009 with RID staff and a representative of Castle Worldwide, the psychometric company working with RID on all certification tests, to get an overview of the test and how it was developed. The full task force met for the first time with RID staff and a Castle Worldwide representative July 11-12. The task force was invited by RID to thoroughly examine the test, the development process, item statistics, English and ASL versions, test pre-requisites

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CDI TASK FORCE *cont'd*

and to consider both short and long-term solutions.

In the short-term, the task force and RID are committed to continuing to offer the opportunity for CDI certification. The task force has recommended that RID post a FAQ to clarify the current status of the test, recommended study materials and recommended pre-requisites.

In the coming months, the task force will be working with RID and Castle Worldwide to:

- Ensure that all test questions are current (e.g., eliminate references to “Code of Ethics”);
- Ensure any items identified as structurally or statistically problematic are revised; and
- Establish appropriate educational prerequisites.

Several activities will be undertaken toward the long-term goal to identify a test design that effectively recognizes qualified deaf interpreters and that is appropriate for deaf adult test-takers.

- Identify a test process that effectively recognizes qualified deaf interpreters and that is appropriate for deaf adult test-takers;
- Conduct demographic surveys and focus groups of test-takers;
- Revisit job delineation in light of NCIEC findings and domains and competencies;
- Explore a variety of test formats to determine which ones allow candidates to best demonstrate their knowledge and skills; and
- Identify appropriate educational pre-requisites for certification.

The task force and RID welcome the ideas of all who are interested in the CDI test. RID is fully committed to doing whatever it will take to be able to offer a viable test for the CDI.

How can you participate?

- Visit and comment on the Web site!
- Review the proposed Deaf Interpreting Domains and Competencies and send your comments to us at info@diinstitute.org.

- Write to us about your comments and concerns about CDI testing.

We hope to hear from you!

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Changing Face of RID Membership

Karen S. Bigham, Director of Member Services

As a result of aggressive recruitment efforts, RID membership exceeded 15,000 members at the end of June—its largest growth ever in a single membership year. Interestingly though, in review of the organization’s growth and transition over the years, one can see some very significant shifts in its make-up, not the least of which is the increase of certified members that now account for the majority of RID’s membership.

Ten years ago, when the associate and certified categories were nearly identical in numbers, it was predicted that associate membership would likely outnumber certified membership three to one by 2010. However, just the opposite trend is taking place. At the end of 2009, there are nearly twice as many certified

members as associate members, and certified membership is expected to triple in the next decade.

Some of the explanation is, of course, in response to the degree requirement imposed in July, but one also has to wonder if the flagging economy hasn’t had some impact as well. Like commuter and online universities around the country that are seeing a major influx of students during this time, it is plausible that RID certification has the same draw—an opportunity to be more competitive in a difficult job market.

The demand for qualified interpreters in the United States still exceeds the supply. Fortunately interpreter training

programs continue to provide new graduates to the workforce, and RID has much to offer newcomers in the field. RID also has a great deal to offer as a professional organization to those who have been in the interpreting field for some time but have yet to obtain certification or have obtained credentialing at the state level, but not joined RID. RID is a terrific resource for educational opportunities, information on new technologies and of course, networking. We encourage all interpreters to become a part of this organization. ■

See corresponding graph on next page.

*Karen S. Bigham,
Director of Member Services*

