

2021

## Self-Reflective Practices: Application Among Sign Language Interpreters

Stephanie Sowa

Rochester Institute of Technology, [stephaniegsowa@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniegsowa@gmail.com)

Campbell McDermid

University of North Carolina, Greensboro, [campbellmcdermid@gmail.com](mailto:campbellmcdermid@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/ijie>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Sign Languages Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Sowa, Stephanie and McDermid, Campbell (2021) "Self-Reflective Practices: Application Among Sign Language Interpreters," *International Journal of Interpreter Education*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/ijie/vol10/iss1/4>

This Research Article is brought to you for free and open access by TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Interpreter Education by an authorized editor of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact [kokeefe@clemson.edu](mailto:kokeefe@clemson.edu).

## Self-Reflective Practices

# Self-Reflective Practices: Application Among Sign Language Interpreters

Stephanie Sowa <sup>1</sup>

*Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York*

Campbell McDermid

*University of North Carolina – Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina*

### Abstract

This study examined self-reflective techniques used by English–American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. While the literature on service industries suggests that self-reflective practices are beneficial (Goswell, 2012; Musolino, 2006), little empirical evidence of those benefits is found in the field of sign language interpreting (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016; Russell & Winston, 2014). Six interpreters were asked to complete an interpretation from American Sign Language into English. They then utilized a retrospective think-aloud protocol to assess their recorded target texts. The three novices focused on specific signs and errors while the three experts talked about the speaker’s goal. This reflects Russell and Winston’s (2014) findings in which the interpreters who produced the most successful target texts also demonstrated higher order reflection. However, due to the small sample size, the results of this study are exploratory at best.

Keywords: self-reflective, novice, expert, self-analysis, Think Aloud Protocol, feedback

---

<sup>1</sup>Correspondence to: [stephaniegsowa@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniegsowa@gmail.com)

## Self-Reflective Practices

# Self-Reflective Practices: Application Among Sign Language Interpreters

## 1. Introduction and background

This study focuses on the importance of self-reflective techniques used by novice and expert sign language interpreters and how they may be incorporated into an interpreter's practice. Based on the observations of the researchers, students in sign language interpretation programs often negatively reflect on their work. Lee (2005) shared a similar concern, finding that students identified the "psychological impact" of performing a self-assessment and described it as "draining" (p. 6). Authors have also noted how sign language interpreters experience burnout and as a result leave the field (Bower, 2015; McCartney, 2006; Schwenke, 2011; Watson, 1987). Greater awareness of strategies for reflection might reduce such self-critique and the emotional toll that sign language interpreters experience.

Sign language interpreter educators value self-reflective practices (Bonni, 1981; Isham, 1986; Russell & Winston, 2014; Winston, 2005). Bonni (1981) mentioned its inclusion in education programs as early as 1981. Two decades later, Winston (2005) reported on the results of a survey sent to interpreter and American Sign Language (ASL) educators. She noted that 32 of 33 respondents to a question about effective teaching activities described an activity designed to promote self-reflection (Winston, 2005). However, few studies in the field (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016; Russell & Winston, 2014; Smith, 2014) investigate how sign language interpreters actually use self-reflective practices. Current studies have also only looked at working interpreters (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016; Russell & Winston, 2014) and have not examined how students in sign language interpretation programs practice reflection. This project was conducted to address those gaps.

## 2. Research questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What definition do novice and expert interpreters have for self-reflection?
2. What are their feelings about the practice?
3. What steps do they take or what format do they follow?

## 3. What is self-reflection?

There is no shared operational definition of self-reflective practice among sign language interpreters. As early as 1981, Bonni wrote of the inclusion of self-analysis in her lesson plans for sign language interpreters and presented this at the national convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers.

## Self-Reflective Practices

However, no definition was provided. Years later Winston (2005) wrote of “the need for learners [of sign language interpreting] to be able to assess their own learning and abilities” but went on to say, “yet frequently students graduate from [interpreter education] programs unable to do this” (p. 212). In a recent case study of one interpreter by Dangerfield and Napier (2016), the participant shared that she did not know how to self-reflect.

For the purpose of this study, *self-reflection* was defined as careful thought about one’s behaviors and beliefs (“Self-Analysis,” 2017). Self-reflection occurs retrospectively, as the interpreter reviews his or her work in order to understand interpreting processes and choices. It can utilize different levels of thinking strategies, defined below using Bloom’s Taxonomy (Adams, 2015). Self-reflection should include the application of a framework and the evaluation of performance, leading to a synthesis of ideas and new understanding.

Self-reflection as it relates to interpreting can look at broad areas such as the ability to transfer meaning, language fluency, and overall delivery (Lee, 2005). Within those broad categories, an interpreter can identify discrete skills, such as grammatical errors or omissions (Lee, 2005). Dangerfield and Napier (2016) focused on strengths and weaknesses in their case study of a sign language interpreter and found similar results to Lee (2005). In their study, the interpreter looked at the production of miscues, errors that include an omission or addition of information (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016). Other areas of focus in that study included aspects of demand-control schema, including intrapersonal demands as well as problem-solving behaviors. Once reflection has occurred the process can then lead to the establishment of goals (Lee, 2005), both short and long term.

The process of self-reflection is also deliberate practice, or purposeful attention or concentration on one specific skill set, which allows for continual development (Ericsson, 2006). Self-reflection should also be done systematically, that is, with some routine (e.g., weekly or monthly). Ericsson (2006) estimated that after an individual completes 50 hours of practicing a specific skill, that skill becomes automated. Reflective practice can be one of those skill sets, and one that sign language interpreters need time to develop.

In summary, and as a definition for this study, self-reflective practice can be characterized as:

- Deliberate practice;
- Retrospective reflection;
- Routinely performed;
- Focused and defined on broad skill sets or specific abilities and/or knowledge;
- Inclusive of abilities and success in addition to error patterns;
- Involving higher order thinking beyond recognition, to evaluation and synthesis/creation; and
- Leading to improved performance or knowledge.

### 3.1 Why is self-reflection important for interpreters?

As noted earlier, self-reflection can help to combat precursors to burnout among sign language interpreters. Dean and Pollard (2001) have advocated a form of guided reflection known as demand-control theory. In this approach, interpreters predict challenges they will face in their assignments in terms of logistics (environmental challenges), conflicts with the participants of the event (interpersonal challenges), language issues (linguistic challenges), and potential inner conflicts (intrapersonal challenges). They are also asked to reflect after the assignment is completed. Dean and Pollard (2001) believed that such a systematic approach could give interpreters a better sense of their ability to make decisions and alleviate stress.

In addition to alleviating stress, self-reflection may enhance an interpreter’s ability to use professional discretion when taking assignments (Hoza, 1990; Winston, 2005). This would in turn allow them to more readily adhere to the sign language interpreter’s *Code of Professional Conduct* (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2005), which says that service providers should accept assignments that parallel their skill level.

Self-reflection has other benefits as well. It may build autonomy in an interpreter, a value identified by Lee (2005). Guided reflection over a short period of time was found to improve the work of a professional interpreter (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016). Lee (2005) examined how students in a Korean-English graduate

## Self-Reflective Practices

program in translation and interpretation analyzed their work while being supervised in a classroom and concluded that students who used self-assessment were better able to successfully recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

### 3.2 *What hinders interpreters from completing self-reflection?*

Several impediments to professional self-reflection have been identified. Musolino (2006) focused on the self-assessment abilities of physical therapy students and entry-level graduates and asked participants what they felt hindered their ability to self-reflect. She found, “The following were perceived as barriers: time; lack of feedback or mentoring; demands of health care delivery and educational systems; attitudes of peers, self, and faculty; and inability to differentiate personal strengths and weaknesses from comparisons with others” (p. 38). For example, one participant shared, “I compare myself to others and this can be a barrier” (p. 38). Participants were also afraid to complete self-reflective practices because of their own self-deprecating judgments. Another barrier may be a lack of motivation, about which a participant said, “Sometimes you are lazy and just don’t want to do it” (Musolino, 2006, p. 39).

The feelings among the students in the Musolino (2006) study parallel the feelings of the students who partook in Lee’s (2005) research on translation students working between English and Korean. In that study, the students valued reflection but “admitted that they rarely listened to their own performances in earnest” (p. 6). They also identified time and the inability to improve their weaknesses as factors hindering self-reflection. Therefore, it is important to note that, as Dangerfield and Napier (2006) found, self-reflective practices should be promoted “via supported environments such as ongoing mentorship, training and professional development” (p. 1).

### 3.3 *What promotes self-reflection?*

A number of reflective techniques have been suggested to foster effective self-assessment (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016; Winston, 2005). To reduce self-deprecation, students completing a self-assessment must view their practice objectively, instead of including their personal feelings and opinions (Lee, 2005). Students might be guided to self-reflect by, for example, being asked to look at specific areas such as meaning (or the ability to transfer meaning between languages), language use (fluency), and overall delivery (Lee, 2005). As mentioned earlier, the framework promoted by demand-control theory (Dean & Pollard, 2001) may also be a tool for systematic self-reflection.

Winston (2005) described activities such as process mediation and a “fishbowl technique”—in which students watch their peers discuss their process—as effective in promoting reflection. Winston also suggested that interpreters consider Bloom’s taxonomy of six categories of learning when self-reflecting (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), to assess work and to improve upon weaknesses. This practice could also encourage deeper or higher order thinking, as suggested by Russell and Winston (2014).

In terms of Bloom’s taxonomy, showing knowledge of a topic or comprehension (Adams, 2015) may be considered lower levels of cognitive processing. Slightly higher would be the application of the correct word while interpreting. According to Adams’s description of Bloom’s work, higher levels of thinking involve the act of analyzing, synthesizing and then evaluation. For sign language interpreters this could mean the ability to analyze a speaker’s intent, synthesize a target text that includes that intent, and then evaluate the efficacy of the target text created.

Interpreters might also implement a systematic approach to self-reflection by establishing long and short-term goals (Isham, 1986), with specific time frames and outcomes. A short-term goal might be to improve the ability to translate fingerspelled words from ASL into spoken English, or to incorporate more nonmanual markers (such as raising one’s eyebrows to indicate a yes/no question) in an ASL target text. Lee (2005) encouraged this targeted approach and described how a self-review could be used to establish goals.

## Self-Reflective Practices

### 3.4 Should interpreters use a think-aloud protocol when reflecting on their work?

Another method described in the literature on sign language interpreting (Russell & Winston, 2014; Smith, 2014) is a "think-aloud" protocol (TAP). The TAP process has been used for decades to examine the work of spoken language interpreters (Bernardini, 2001; Jääskeläinen, 2010; Kussmaul & Tirkkonen-Condit, 1995; Li, 2004). Smith (2014), a sign language interpreter practitioner and educator, uses the process for her own reflection and as an educational tool. The TAP process has also been used to conduct research into sign language interpreters, and educators have been encouraged to adopt the technique in the classroom (Russell & Winston, 2014). The protocol involves asking an interpreter "to verbalize whatever crosses their mind during the task performance" (Jaaskelainen, 2010, p. 370). A retrospective TAP process can guide the participants' reflection to the processes used while interpreting, rather than to the product (Russell & Winston, 2014; Smith, 2014). Understanding decisions about an interpreter's process is crucial because those decisions can then impact the choices an interpreter makes for the final interpretation. Self-reflection is also important for developing critical thinking instead of criticism of the work (Russell & Winston, 2014).

As a framework for their study, Russell and Winston (2014) employed a propositional analysis over several dimensions of a text, and a four-point scale, which ranged from *effective* to *ineffective*. They categorized the ineffective interpretations as those that followed "a lexical representation of the teacher's words, with frequent grammatical errors, content errors and/or significant omissions" (pp. 112–113). Effective interpretations, on the other hand, represented "meaning-based work" (p. 112). Interpreters working at this level considered the needs of the audience, such as the Deaf student, or the goal of the speaker, a teacher in a classroom, and produced more effective messages when working from English into ASL (Russell & Winston, 2014).

### 3.5 Benefits of TAP

A TAP can look at a myriad of areas and has many benefits. Common themes noted by Smith (2014) in the TAP process of sign language interpreters include "depth of processing," "vocabulary range," the "co-construction of meaning" where the interpreter considers the audience's needs (p. 138), "extralinguistic knowledge," "interpersonal demands," models of the interpreting process, and "ethical reasoning" (p. 139). Performing a TAP in the moment may limit the time a participant has to negatively criticize what he or she saw and instead may facilitate open and spontaneous dialogue about the work (Russell & Winston, 2014). A retrospective TAP, in which an interpreter comments on the work product after the fact, may also be more effective than reflection in the moment, as interpreters may not have the cognitive space to produce the language needed for self-reflection while actively interpreting (Kussmaul & Tirkkonen-Condit, 1995; Smith, 2014).

### 3.6 Weakness of a TAP

There are several caveats and considerations when using a TAP process. One author suggested that data "from initial TAPs may be more superficial when compared to data from later TAPs when one has developed a level of mastery in verbalizing thoughts" (Smith, 2014, p. 132). Thus to be effective the TAP process should be taught to the participants or utilized over a number of different occasions.

Bernardini (2001) argued against a retrospective TAP process, in that the information could be coming from the interpreter or translator's long-term memory and not short-term or working memory. She also preferred a monologue process, in which the translator is left to verbalize thoughts without direction and possible influence from a second party.

Li (2004) created a framework for designing a successful TAP and argued that a good research study utilizing a TAP would do the following:

- Ensure anonymity and voluntary participation;
- Contain purposeful sampling, avoiding generalization of the findings;

## Self-Reflective Practices

- Utilize triangulation;
- Include “prolonged engagement” (p. 304) to account for the impact and biases of the researcher;
- Be performed in naturalistic situations;
- Use “peer debriefing, stepwise replicate and intercoder reliability” (p. 304);
- Use member checking with the participants on the findings; and
- Use thick descriptions. (Li, 2004).

However, of the 15 studies involving translators that Li (2004) examined, only three strategies were mentioned frequently: “refraining from generalizing findings (73.3%), triangulation of data-collection methods (60%), and thick description in reports (53.3%)” (p. 306). Several of the remaining strategies were not mentioned (member-checking, “assurance of anonymity”) while the remaining were utilized in only 30% of the studies (Li, 2004). In addition to Li’s (2004) concerns, Bernadini (2001) reviewed several studies on translation utilizing the TAP process and found a lack of research design and no operational definition for constructs under investigation, such as “routine” or “nonroutine” interpreting tasks.

While they supported a dialogic TAP process, for example, between a researcher and an interpreter, Kussmaul and Tirkkonen-Condit (1995) also noted pitfalls with this approach: The interpreter’s responses would be co-constructed and not just their own thoughts. A dominant personality may shift the TAP to one view of translation. There was also no guarantee that the information would be more than superficial as many professional translators’ strategies may have become automatic (Kussmaul & Tirkkonen-Condit, 1995).

## 4. Methodology

To examine the different self-reflective techniques, or lack of these, used among a small group of six sign language interpreters, this study was designed within a qualitative framework. It included three methods of data collection: a short interview, the elicitation of a simultaneous interpretation from a short sample of ASL into spoken English, and then a TAP while the participants reviewed their work. The data from these and the research served as a source of triangulation, as suggested by the literature (Li, 2004).

### 4.1 Participants

The participants were drawn from the northeastern region of the United States. They included three novices who were attending an ASL–English interpretation education program and were in their final semester of a 4-year baccalaureate program. Three experts who worked in close proximity of the education program also participated. An “expert” interpreter was defined as a sign language interpreter who was nationally certified from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. To ensure anonymity, the novice interpreters were given the designation N1, N2 and N3; expert interpreters were designated as E1, E2 and E3. Additional demographic information can be found in Table 1.

As a first step in the process, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. Table 1 is a breakdown of their characteristics.

## Self-Reflective Practices

Table 1: Demographic information.

Demographic	Novice	Expert
female	2	2
male	1	1
Enrolled in an interpreter education program	3	0
Nationally certified	0	3
Age	≤24	≥30
Years as a working interpreter	~1	8-24

Each participant was then interviewed for 30 minutes (see Appendix for the interview questions). All of the interviews were recorded for further analysis. Questions 1 through 4 of the interview questions were designed to establish a baseline of the participants' definition of feedback. Questions 5 through 8 were constructed in much the same manner as those used by Russell and Winston (2014), who used prompts such as "How did you feel about the work?" and "In what ways was the work effective?" (p. 111). These solicited the interpreters' view of their performance and of the self-reflective process.

After the interviews were completed, the participants were then asked to watch a 3-minute clip of a person using ASL. This clip was chosen from a TedX Islay presentation, "Reaching Out to a Global Deaf Community," (Chandani, 2010) because the topic was familiar to most interpreters. The participants interpreted the presentation from ASL to English. They then watched and listened to their interpretation and commented upon their work using a retrospective TAP. Participants were told they could comment on both negative and positive aspects of their work as well as on the methods they used while processing the source message. The results were qualitatively analyzed using a constant-comparative method to look for similarities and differences between the novice and experts' self-reflection and the approaches they used. Broad themes and properties were identified.

## 5. Findings

During the interview, participants were asked if they had any set routine for self-reflection. None of the participants reported having a formal routine to reflect on their work. E1 and E2, mentioned that they would reflect upon their work only if they felt there were numerous errors that had to be addressed. But overall, none of the participants had a set self-reflection routine. When asked, "Do you believe that self-analysis is important to advancing your career? If so, why?" all participants responded that self-reflection is crucial for the development of one's career.

When prompted in the interview about how identifying the critiques of their work could help improve their interpreting, N2 replied,

It's somewhat helpful. Because I know that, when I analyze my work I notice patterns. So it's good that I know there is a problem. But again, I don't know if that helps me improve anyway. I just notice it's still a problem.

N3 found analyzing one's own work less beneficial than receiving feedback from outside sources (mentor, consumer, team). This novice believed that if a specific area or pattern was recognized by an outside source, it truly needed improvement. In their reflections, not only did the novices focus mainly on



## Self-Reflective Practices

the aspects of the work that needed to be improved, they also rarely gave suggestions on how their work could be amended for the future.

Next, comments from the participants during a TAP review of their recorded work interpreting from ASL into spoken English were analyzed. Table 2 summarizes both the interview questions and the TAP process. One characteristic of their spoken English target texts that they noted and wanted to avoid was “up-speak,” in which they gave the final word or syllable in a sentence a higher inflection or emphasis; this could make a declarative sentence sound like an interrogative sentence, or make the speaker sound unsure of herself. Participants also noted their use of “filler words” such as “um” or “ah.” Affect was also mentioned: Participants reflected that they needed to work on conveying the passion of the speaker and his positive approach to his topic without sounding monotone.

*Table 2: Summary of responses.*

Category	Novice answers	Expert answers
Definition of self-reflection	Focused on the production errors made in order to improve the work	Focused on the overall process and if the interpretation matched the speaker’s goal and tone
Current self-reflection routine	No formal routine set	No formal routine set
Importance of self-reflection in an Interpreter’s Career	It is critical for development	Interpreters must complete analysis in order to improve
Topic of focus in the reflection	Processing time, use of up-speak, misunderstanding, adding filler words, preparation time	Matching the affect, matching the tone of voice used, applying accurate vocabulary, Sounding like a native English user, need for preparation materials

When participants were asked to reflect on their interpreted target texts and about the process of reflection, all novice interpreters described it as very important and they said it allowed them to focus on the production errors in their work in order to improve their skills. All three mentioned trying to focus on improving one part of their work when going into an assignment, so it would lead to a clearer message. This seemed to be an aspect of their reflective practice: the focus on one aspect of their work that they thought could be improved upon and using that as preparation for the next assignment.

Overall, however, the novice interpreters tended to focus on the negative aspects of their work including a short processing time; using up-speak, which made them sound unsure of their final product; misunderstanding the source message, adding filler words when they were unsure; and believing that additional preparation time would help with the outcome of the interpretation. They also described how overwhelming it was to watch their work and comment on it, as they found there were too many skills to look at all at once. In general, they talked about how it was discouraging to hear their work again because they saw so many things wrong with it.

On the other hand, the expert interpreters focused mostly on the overall success of their work and were more positive. They looked at whether their target texts matched the goal and tone of the speaker. They focused most of their feedback on the overall sound and quality of the interpretation and on matching the affect of the speaker. They described selecting appropriate vocabulary and tried to restructure sentences so they sounded like the presenter was a native English speaker. They noted instances in which they felt that they had interpreted successfully. They talked about how when an assignment went badly, they tried to think of ways to improve their performance rather than fixate on something they missed or translated inaccurately, such as a single sign. Ideas included shifting their role to have more control over the environment and to get their needs met. One participant emphasized the need for collecting and using preparation materials, which they felt would have improved their interpretation.

## Self-Reflective Practices

Four of the six participants felt that using a TAP was beneficial to their practice. They noted that the TAP helped them to:

- verbalize their interpretation process,
- consider different ways to translate portions of the ASL text into spoken English,
- study the ASL text and again to better understand what the signer meant,
- recognize the problems in their work,
- find the positive aspects of their work,
- and to understand their thought patterns behind their decisions.

The two remaining participants felt it was more helpful to receive feedback from colleagues than to perform a self-assessment. They believed that if a colleague or peer noticed an area that needed to improve, it was a serious mistake that needed immediate remediation.

## 6. Discussion/summary

The goal of this study was to examine the self-reflective practices of both novice and expert sign language interpreters. There were a number of limitations, however, that should be acknowledged: The study used a small sample size, and participants were chosen using convenience sampling, meaning that all worked within the same geographical location. As a cohort, they could have shared a similar way to talk about feedback and how they engaged in it. Participant E1 also noted “interpreters may try to position themselves to defend their work when talking about it in front of other colleagues.” To address these limitations, a larger and more representative sample could be examined, for example, one that included student interpreters from different programs. To address the act of positioning, the interviewer could leave the room while participants reflected on their work, thus utilizing a monologue approach (as suggested by Bernadini, 2001).

The first research question addressed in this study was “What definition do novice and expert interpreters have for self-reflection?” As noted in the literature (Bonni, 1981; Winston, 2005), sign language interpreter educators have talked about the value of self-reflection. However, in this sample, neither student nor expert interpreters were able to define such practices, which is similar to the findings of Dangerfield and Napier (2016). Perhaps as a beginning, interpreters might consider the operational definition used by this study for deliberate practice and consider using the TAP as a framework.

The second research question was, “What are their feelings about the practice?” Four of the six participants of this study valued the process of reflecting on their work; the other two preferred having an expert review their work. Regardless of preference, findings indicated that while reflection or assessment of some type was valued, it was not being practiced. Interpreters might find it useful to create a more systematic approach and schedule time to engage in self-reflection or in working with a peer or expert to evaluate their practices.

In terms of the value of using the TAP process, similar findings were reported in other studies of working, professional sign language interpreters (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016; Russell & Winston, 2014). For example in the Russell and Winston (2014) study the working interpreters agreed that self-reflective practices could be used to continue enhancing their practice. In this study, both the expert interpreters and the novices agreed to the benefits of self-reflection, thus indicating recognition of the practice even in students of sign language interpretation. For example, four of the six interpreters in this study talked about how reflecting on their work helped them find new ways to translate a text: It allowed them to acknowledge their successes and gave them access to their own cognitive processes. It also helped them identify problematic areas.

The third research question asked was, “What steps do they take or what format do they follow?” The three novice interpreters in this study focused on how they could improve their work but had a limited understanding of how to apply the patterns found in self-reflection to their practice. Dangerfield and Napier

## Self-Reflective Practices

(2016) found something similar, in that the working interpreter in their study who they deemed a novice “did not use self-reflective terminology in her discussions” unless prompted (p. 20). This interpreter also initially did not know how to use self-reflection (Dangerfield & Napier, 2016, p. 13). Perhaps for the group of novices in this study there is need for further practice within their program prior to graduation on how to perform self-reflective activities.

The three expert interpreters in this study, on the other hand, were able to analyze their work in regards to the overall goal of the meaning and message rather than just the linguistic aspects. Russell and Winston (2014) found a similar pattern in working interpreters who identified “less successful” or “more successful” target text productions. Three of the interpreters were deemed experts as they produced more successful target texts and did so by reflecting on the goal of the speaker, a teacher in a classroom, or on the needs of the student, or the interpreting process (Russell & Winston, 2014). For example, one interpreter in the study shared, “I think she [the teacher] is linking this to previous knowledge and wants them to question what they know about drug use...” (Russell & Winston, 2014, p. 114). Those deemed less successful or ineffective focused on lexical issues such as sign choices (Russell & Winston, 2014). So it would appear that some working interpreters do develop successful reflection techniques but do so without a systematic model to guide them.

Overall, and as a summary of the findings for this study, the participants valued examining their work and had the goal of improving their practice. However, neither the novices nor the working professional interpreters had a consistent protocol for them to do so. Perhaps the definition of reflective practice as described in this study and the use of activities such as the TAP will help guide interpreters towards a systematic process. That process should consistently involve deeper order thinking, such as Bloom’s evaluation and application (Adams, 2015).

## References

- Adams, N. E. (2015). Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive learning objectives. *Journal of the Medical Library Association, 103*(3), 152–153. doi: 10.3163/1536-5050.103.3.010
- Bernardini, S. (2001). *Think-aloud protocols in translation research. Target, 13*(2), 241–263.
- Bonni, B. (1981). Point of concentration. In L. Siple (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Second National Convention: Conference of Interpreter Trainers* (pp. 1–9). Conference of Interpreter Trainers.
- Bower, K. (2015). Stress and burnout in video relay service (VRS) interpreting. *Journal of Interpretation, 24*(1), 1–16. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/2>
- Chandani, A. (2010). *Reaching out to the global Deaf community* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keHK-bMEZts>
- Dangerfield, K., & Napier, J. (2016). Tracking the development of critical self-reflective practice of a novice sign language interpreter: A case study. *Journal of Interpretation, 25*(1), 1–25.
- Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2001). Application of demand-control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 6*(1), 1–14.
- Ericsson, K., & Simon, H. (1980). Verbal reports as data. *Psychological Review, 87*, 215–251.

## Self-Reflective Practices

- Goswell, D. (2012). Do you see what I see? Using ELAN for self-analysis and reflection. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 4(1), 73–82.
- Hoza, J. (1990). Doing the right thing: Interpreter role and ethics within a bilingual/bicultural model. *Proceedings from the Conference of Interpreter Trainers, Conference 1990: Educational foundations for bridges of understanding*. USA: Conference of Interpreter Trainers.
- Isham, W. P. (1986). The role of message analysis in interpretation. In M. L. McIntire (Ed.), *Interpreting: The art of cross-cultural mediation* (pp. 111–122). Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.
- Jääskeläinen, R. (2010). Think-aloud protocol. *Handbook of Translation Studies*, 1, 371–372.
- Kusmaul, P., & Tirkkonen-Condit, S. (1995). Think-aloud protocol analysis in translation studies. *TTR: Traduction, Terminologies, Rédaction*, 8(1), 177–199. doi:10.7202/037201ar
- Lee, Y. (2005). Self-assessment as an autonomous learning tool in an interpretation classroom. *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 50(4), 1–8. Retrieved from <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019869ar>.
- Li, D. (2004). Trustworthiness of think-aloud protocols in the study of translation processes. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(3), 301–313.
- McCartney, J. (2006). Burnout of sign language interpreters: A comparative study of K–12, postsecondary, and community interpreters. *Journal of Interpretation*, 83–108.
- Musolino, G. (2006). Fostering reflective practice: Self-assessment abilities of physical therapy students and entry level graduates. *Journal of Allied Health*, 35(1), 30–42.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2005). *NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct*. Alexandria, VA: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Retrieved from [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-\\_HBAap35D1R1MwYk9hTUpuc3M/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-_HBAap35D1R1MwYk9hTUpuc3M/view)
- Russell, D., & Winston, B. (2014). Tapping into the interpreting process: Using participant reports to inform the interpreting process in educational settings. *Translation & Interpreting*, 6(1), 102–127.
- Schwenke, T. (2012). Sign language interpreters and burnout. *Journal of Interpretation*, 20(1), 31–54.
- Self-Analysis. (2017). In *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/self-analysis>
- Smith, A. (2014). Think aloud protocols: Viable for teaching, learning, and professional development in interpreting. *Translation & Interpreting*, 6(1), 128–143. doi: ti.106201.2014.a07
- Watson, J. (1987). Interpreter burnout. *Journal of Interpretation*, 79–86.
- Winston, E. (2005). Designing a curriculum for American Sign Language/English interpreting educators. In M. Marschark, R. Peterson, & E. A. Winston (Eds.), *Sign language interpreting and interpreter education: Directions for research and practice* (pp. 208–234). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

## **Self-Reflective Practices**

### **Appendix: Interview questions**

1. Before we begin, how do you define self-analysis?
2. Do you currently have any self-feedback strategies you complete on a regular basis?
3. Do you believe that self-feedback is important to advancing your career? If so, why?
4. Now that you have completed your video, how do you think the interpretation went?
5. Overall, what did you believe your strengths and weaknesses were before listening to the clip again?
6. What is something new you have noticed about your work while watching this interpretation?
7. What would you do differently if you completed this interpretation again?
8. Do you think that giving yourself feedback was helpful in regard to improving your work? If so, why? If you do not believe it was helpful, please explain why.
9. Do you have a set routine for doing self-assessment or reflection and can you describe it?