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Job Demands and Resources: An exploration of sign language interpreter educators' experiences

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Abstract

This article presents preliminary research regarding sign language interpreter educators' experiences of job demands and job resources. The study draws on job demand–resources theory (Bakker et al, 2014), where job demands have been identified as leading causes of burnout leading to poor health and negative organizational outcomes, and job resources are the main drivers of work engagement leading to increased well-being and positive organizational outcomes. In considering the 'readiness to work' gap evident in graduating sign language interpreting students (Anderson & Stauffer, 1990), not enough attention has been paid to interpreter educators' ability to deliver what is needed. By examining the balance (or lack thereof) between job demands and job resources, we may have a better understanding of the pressures that sign interpreter educators face in delivering the level of education needed to prepare sign language interpreting students. This article provides an overview of a qualitative scoping study, which involved conducting semistructured interviews with eight sign language interpreter educators in four different English-speaking countries, and the key themes that emerged in terms of the job demands experienced by, and job resources available to, sign language interpreter educators, with suggestions as to the potential relationship to student readiness to work as interpreters.

Keywords: Job Demands-Resource Theory, Interpreter Education, Burnout, Student Readiness.

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Job Demands and Resources: An exploration of sign language interpreter educators' experiences

Drawing on job demands–resources theory (Demerouti, 2001; Bakker and Demerouti 2007; Bakker et al., 2014) this paper presents preliminary findings of a study of sign language interpreter educators' experiences of job demands and job resources, and their perceptions of how these factors contribute to student learning outcomes. The experiences of a small sample of sign language interpreter educators across four countries: Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States are included. The article provides an overview of key themes that emerged in terms of the job demands experienced by, and job resources available to, sign language interpreter educators, with suggestions as to the potential relationship to student readiness to work as interpreters.

In order to examine the current experience of sign language interpreter educators it is important to first of all contextualise the development of the sign language interpreting profession and the subsequent development of formal sign language interpreter education.

Sign language interpreting was first described as an emerging profession in the early 1990s, and some would argue that it is still emerging (Napier, 2011). Prior to the professionalization of sign language interpreting, the role of 'interpreter' for deaf people was typically taken on by family members (often children with deaf parents), welfare and religious workers, and teachers of the deaf (Napier et al., 2010). These people generally had no formal language or interpreting training, and often no other educational qualifications. The professionalization process began as a result of the recognition of sign languages as real languages, and developments of disability discrimination and civil rights legislation, so demands for interpreting services increased and formal education and training provision for interpreters became more necessary (Swabey & Mickelson, 2008). Training was initially provided on an ad hoc basis, which led to the establishment of educational routes to practice and 'academicization' of interpreter education through formal college and university programs (Napier & Leeson, in press). Although in many countries formal sign language interpreter education programs have flourished, the professional 'readiness' of graduates has been questioned because they do not necessarily demonstrate the necessary competence to work professionally as interpreters (Patrie, 1994; Stauffer, 1994; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2004). This has been described as a 'readiness to work' gap (Anderson & Stauffer, 1990) or the 'readiness-to-credential' gap (Godfrey, 2010), and is defined as follows:

[The readiness-to-work gap] indicates that students graduate but are not ready to gain employment as an interpreter practitioner who is competent to provide services across a wide variety of settings... the [readiness-to-credential gap] indicates that students graduate and may be employed to provide rudimentary interpreting services in limited settings but are not yet ready to obtain interpreting credentials set forth by the field at either the state or the national level. (Godfrey, 2010, p. 89)

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Research that explores the sign language interpreter profile in relation to aptitude, cognitive flexibility and personality has attempted to explain why sign language interpreter graduates may not necessarily be ready to work professionally as interpreters upon graduation (see, e.g., Bontempo & Napier, 2007; Bontempo & Napier, 2009; Bontempo & Napier, 2011; Bontempo et al., 2014; López Gómez et al., 2007; Macnamara et al., 2011; Shaw, 2011; Shaw et al., 2004; Shaw & Hughes 2006; Stauffer & Shaw, 2006) To date, however, only one study has explored the relationship between interpreter education programs in the United States and the readiness to work challenges affecting graduating students (Godfrey, 2010).

Godfrey examined characteristics of interpreter education programs with the lowest readiness-to-credential gap, and proposed that programs from which graduates received their American Sign Language interpreter credentials within the shortest time after graduation were the most effective. Within this study it was identified that the readiness to credential gap varies depending on program duration and the type of credential. For example, graduates from 2-year programs require more time to gain credentials than graduates from 4-year programs. This suggests program duration does have a degree of influence over graduate credentialing and therefore, whether or not the program is in a higher education institutions (HEI) is a contributing factor to professional readiness. One major factor impacting credential rates identified in her study was the presence of service learning and practicum within the program curriculum. Godfrey suggests classroom instruction alone is inadequate to produce work ready interpreter practitioners; hence service learning and practicum experiences are essential components of interpreter education. Components such as these require partnerships between programs and individuals and organizations outside of the HEI. Therefore, if programs are unable to develop such partnerships with external entities (e.g., the Deaf community, professional interpreters, interpreting agencies), it may be difficult for programs to be effective, which again demonstrates how HEIs may impact professional readiness. Godfrey also noted literature-based speculations regarding the conditions of educational programs and how they may influence student outcomes (e.g., lack of facilities and characteristics of classroom instructions) (see Lackney, 1994). However, the results from Godfrey's (2010) study did not reveal anything regarding this matter. Godfrey closely examined program structures, curricula and staffing structures, and found that there was a correlation between the characteristics of the interpreter education program and student learning outcomes. She did not, however, interrogate the experiences and perceptions of the interpreter educators themselves about any challenges that they face in delivering the goals of the program in which they teach. It is possible to consider that, even in programs that are considered effective in Godfrey's terms, educators may still feel pressure as a result of tensions between expectations of the education sector and the requirements of the sign language interpreting profession. Even if curricula are revised to reflect the needs of the community and profession (see Cokely, 2005) there may be other factors that may contribute to educators' capacity to deliver work- or credential-ready sign language interpreter graduates.

1. Literature review

1.1. *Job Demands-Resources Theory*

The job demands–resources (JD-R) model acknowledges that every occupation has specific characteristics. These characteristics can be categorized into two groups (a) job demands and (b) job resources. Hence, JD-R theory can be applied to all work environments and tailored to specific occupations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). To date, this theory has not been applied specifically to sign language interpreter educators, which makes this research unique while complementing Dean and Pollard's (2001, 2011, 2013) examination of demands and controls for sign language interpreter practitioners and the implications for stress and interpreter education. Bakker and Demerouti (2007, p. 312) describe job demands as the “physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs,” whereas job resources are “those

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physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals, reducing job demands and the associated physical and psychological costs, stimulate personal growth, learning and development". Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 296) explain job demands are the "things" to be done in the context of an occupation. Job resources are then the means that support an employee in doing those things. Bakker et al. (2014) describe the flexibility of the model's application to various occupations, given that some demands and resources (such as work pressure, autonomy) can be found across almost all occupational groups, whereas job demands and resources are more specialized. For example, they suggest physical demands remain important for construction workers and nurses, whereas cognitive demands are more relevant for scientists and engineers. JD-R theory also suggests that job demands and resources trigger a health impairment process and a motivational process. Job demands require effort on the part of the employee hence generally predict exhaustion, health complaints and repetitive strain injury (Bakker et al., 2003; Hakanen et al., 2006). Job resources support employees in their efforts and therefore have been linked to predict work enjoyment, motivation and work engagement (see Bakker et al., 2008, Hakanen et al., 2008, Halbesleben, 2010).

Many studies have supported the dual pathways to employee well-being proposed by JD-R theory and have shown that the model can predict important organizational outcomes (Bakker et al., 2014). With this in mind, by applying JD-R theory to sign language interpreter educators may provide better insight into why graduates from interpreter education programs may lack sufficient work readiness. Nahrgang et al. (2011) tested the relationship between job demands and job resources and burnout, engagement and safety outcomes in the workplace and found support for the JD-R model in the context of safety at work. Job demands (including risks and hazards) led to burnout; on the other hand, job resources (such as safety climate) led to work engagement, which predicted lower accidents and injuries. Boyd et al. (2011) investigated the antecedents of psychological strain and organizational commitment among university academics in Australia. Personality was integrated into the JD-R model to show how an expanded model can better explain employee well-being (Bakker et al., 2010). Its findings demonstrated support for the two proposed processes; job demands predicted health impairment while job resources predicted organizational commitment. Although these processes are often viewed independently, many studies have noted how they interact. JD-R theory suggests job demands and job resources may have a combined effect on well-being and indirectly influence job performance. The first interaction is one in which job resources buffer the impact of job demands on strain (Bakker et al., 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), and the second interaction is one in which job demands amplify the impact of job resources on motivation/engagement (Bakker et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2005).

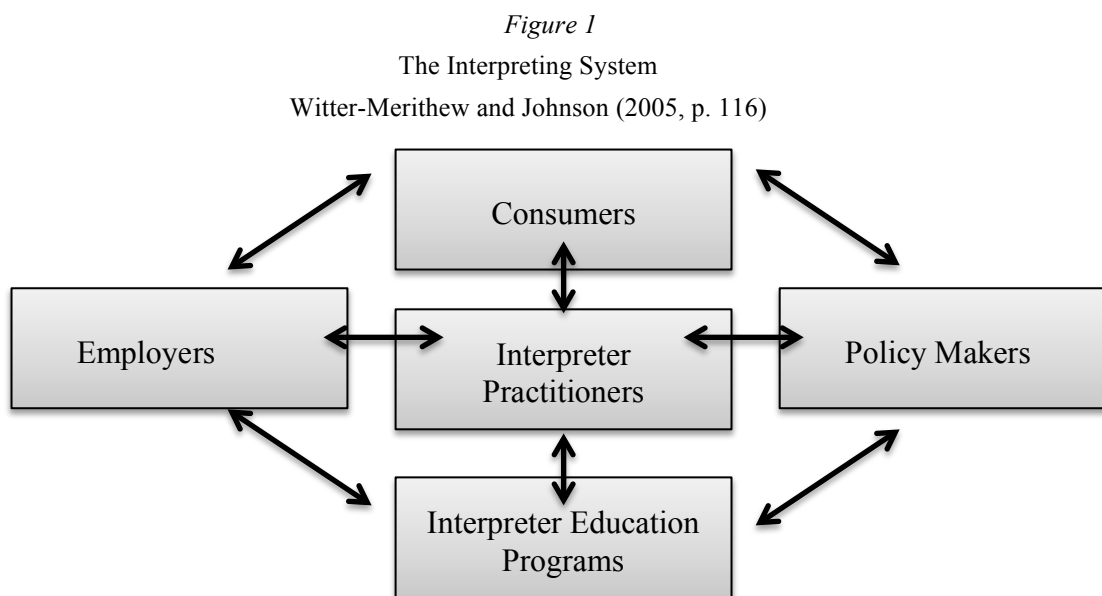
Therefore, identifying job demands and job resources of sign language interpreter educators may provide insight into the overall well-being of sign language interpreter educators. If job demands are high and resources are low it may have an impact on overall job performance (teaching), which in turn may affect educational outcomes (student learning and work readiness). Additionally, specific job demands experienced by sign language interpreter educators and the resources they use to manage such demands have not yet been documented, which supports the need for further research. When examining the experiences of sign language interpreter educators, it is important to consider sign language interpreter education in the wider context of education as a system.

1.2. *Education as a system*

A *system* is an entity that exists through the interconnected interactions of its parts. Higher education systems (HESs) comprise HEIs, consisting of schools, departments, and programs. Paradeise and Thoenig (2013) describe Higher Education (HE) as highly complex institutions with several layers of governance and authority. Due to the interconnectedness of an HES, if one or more these parts, or layers as described by Paradeise and Thoenig (2013), break down it may create a disruption to its counterparts. For example, the functionality of a sign language interpreter education program may be affected by the school or department where it is housed and the extent of support offered to programs across the school/department (e.g., resource allocation). Sign language interpreter education is bound to two distinct but overlapping systems: HES and the interpreting profession. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005, p. 116) created a diagram (reproduced in Figure 1) to illustrate how the sign language interpreting profession functions as system.

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Although Figure 1 is efficient in showing the interconnectedness within the profession, it does not reveal how sign language interpreter education is also part of the wider system of higher education, and we suggest this connection plays an important role in the overall functionality of, and challenges that may be evident in, interpreter education, which in turn has a direct effect on the profession itself. Although all HEIs are systems, the terminology used to describe the systems varies. Miller (1995) suggests that when researching HE in more than one country it is important to develop a common nomenclature to avoid confusion across the systems. For example, the name and type of HEI may differ (e.g., technical and further education, community college, polytechnic college); program types, length, and awards conferred vary; structures and job titles range (e.g., president or principal, dean or head of school, department head or chair). Countries may have different definitions for different levels of adult education, rather than combining different program types into the same category. In Australia, for example, HE is considered as the education offered at universities only, and therefore students pursuing education at technical and further education colleges are not considered HE students. On the contrary, other countries include vocational, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programs all as part of HE. Goodlad (1995) describes the HES in the United States, specifically in the state of California, as a three-tiered education system. In this system students may begin their education at a vocational level and advance through educational levels, earning various degrees, and all levels are considered part of HE. Considering Goodlad's (1995) and Paradeise and Thoenig's (2013) description of HE, it is justifiable to refer to the various sign language interpreter education programs in the four countries included in this study as a form of HE, regardless of the actual level of offering. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, HE includes all postsecondary educational offerings regardless of institution type.

The purpose of HE varies, and discussing this in depth is beyond the scope of this article. However, it has been suggested that HE has a direct link to employment (Watty, 2006). HEIs have been widely criticized for producing graduates across a variety of disciplines who are not ready to successfully enter the workforce (Toutkoushian, 2005; Mukherjee, 1995; Stensaasen, 1995). Schargel (1996) claims the educational system is failing to produce graduates capable of reading, writing, doing math, and thinking; and features of graduates' professionalism and communication skills have also been challenged. De La Harpe et al. (2000) describe

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unprepared graduates as a global concern. Following on from Anderson and Stauffer's (1990) initial identification of the readiness to work gap in sign language interpreting graduates, Patrie (1994) later confirmed the relationship between HE and employment by stating that sign language interpreting graduates were not 'employment ready' upon graduation. However, due to the continuing shortage of available qualified sign language interpreters, graduates who may not be employment ready remain able to find employment (Bontempo & Levitzke-Gray, 2009; Godfrey 2010). Therefore, Godfrey (2010) notes a readiness to credential gap, in which students may be employable but are not yet ready to obtain professional credentials.

Professional readiness of graduates across all disciplines comes from a variety of factors including those exclusively external to HEIs. Mercer (1993) describes threats to success in three areas: situational, dispositional and institutional. Situational and dispositional are completely external to the HEI. Situational barriers are related to family, job and civic commitments. For example, a student trying to juggle family responsibilities while attending an HEI may struggle to finance or find child care; "time and energy spent trying to 'make ends meet' can drain the most dedicated student" (Fairchild, 2003, p.12). Carney-Crompton and Tan (2002) suggest household income, the number of the dependents in the household and financial aid received by the student are variables that can determine the persistence rate of adult students. Furthermore, dispositional barriers include dissonance among role demands (Mercer, 1993). Home (1998) reports three dimensions of the situational barriers women face: (a) role conflict from simultaneous and incompatible demands, (b) role overload from insufficient time to meet demands, and (c) role contagion (preoccupation with one role while performing another). Home claims full-time students have reported role overload and that student, family, and job demands all contribute to role contagion. Others have suggested factors such as motivation (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992), student personality and intellectual development (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1982) having effects on learning which would then impact professional readiness. Tierney (1988) suggests that HEIs are influenced by powerful external factors and also shaped by strong forces from within such as performance indicators, funding systems and structures, partnerships with industry, and operations of internal management—all of which may be institutional barriers to students' job readiness (Mercer, 1993). However, because educators mediate systemic influences on students, they may have insight into ways to overcome them.

This study was designed with the following research questions in mind:

- What external and internal demands do sign language interpreter educators face?
- What resources do they employ or need to meet such demands?
- How do educators perceive these demands and resources affecting teaching, learning and professional readiness of students?

2. The study

In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative scoping study was designed to elicit information from sign language interpreter educators about their experiences of working within the HES and delivering programs that meet the 'readiness to work' requirements of the sign language interpreting profession. The goal of the study was to collect preliminary data and examine key themes that could be further explored in a doctoral research project.

2.1. Participants

Eight sign language interpreter educator participants across four countries (Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States) were invited to the study through network sampling methods (Hale & Napier, 2013; Carrington, Scott & Wasserman, 2005), using the contacts of the two authors. These countries were chosen

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because they share English as the majority language, and the Deaf community in two of the countries (U.S. and Canada) use American Sign Language (ASL), so that interviews could be conducted in English or ASL, which are the two languages of the primary author of this study.

All the participants were identified as highly experienced sign language interpreters and educators. Three participants had 21+ years of professional teaching experience, four participants had 16–21 years of professional experience and one participant had 6–10 years' experience. Six out of the eight participants were currently sign language interpreter practitioners and recognized as such by a certifying body. Three deaf participants and five hearing participants also participated in the study. See Table 1 for a breakdown of participant demographics.

Table 1: Participant demographics

Pseudonym	Highest level of education	Professional teaching experience (years)	Current Program type	Interpreter?	Credentialed interpreter?
Casey	Currently studying towards PhD	16–20	Postgraduate	Yes	Yes
Courtney	BA	6–10	Certificate	Yes	Yes
Pat	BA	21+	Diploma/Undergraduate	No	N/A
Jesse	MA	16–20	Diploma Program	No	N/A
Rachel	PhD	16–20	Associates/Certificate Program	Yes	Yes
Mary	PhD	21+	Undergraduate	Yes	Yes
Katie	PhD	16–20	Undergraduate & Postgraduate	Yes	Yes
Sandy	Currently studying towards PhD	21+	Postgraduate	Yes	Yes

2.2. Procedure

Because the experiences of sign language interpreter educators had never been studied, we selected the semistructured interview as the research method best suited to perform an initial examination of their perceptions. According to Hale and Napier (2013), in interpreting research, the semistructured interview allows for the interviewee to freely express thoughts and ideas. To fully understand the current experiences of sign language interpreter educators, we wanted to give them freedom of expression, rather than confine them to closed questions in the fixed time frame of a structured interview (Spradley 1979), but we equally valued providing some structure

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with respect to the original purpose of the study.

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After approval through the Heriot-Watt University School of Management and Languages ethics review process, 10 potential participants were contacted by email. Eight sign language interpreter educators agreed to participate in 90-minute semistructured interviews. Seven interviews were conducted using online video software such as Fuze (5) and Skype (2); one interview was conducted face-to-face. All interviews were conducted in either English or ASL. Eleven questions were prepared and focused on eliciting perceptions from participants regarding factors that influence their teaching and assessment practices; factors that influence student success; and their job demands and job resources, while giving us insight into the landscape of the HEI and program in which they work (e.g., hiring processes, funding allocation, performance evaluation etc.). All participants informed of the scope of the study prior to the interview. To avoid biased responses, we did not provide interview questions in advance.

2.3. Analysis

All interviews were video recorded and transcribed or translated from ASL into English. Transcriptions/translations of each interview were uploaded into NVivo software, a qualitative data analysis computer software specifically designed for researchers working with text based or multimedia information. NVivo housed the transcriptions and, we analyzed the transcripts using its query and visualization tools as well as its annotation features. We analyzed the interviews for themes (Aronson, 1994) and identified job demands ($N = 5$) and job resources ($N = 10$) and further subthemes. The interview data were analysed using a six-stage process of thematic analysis:

- (1) familiarization with data,
- (2) generation of initial codes,
- (3) search for themes among codes,
- (4) review of themes,
- (5) defining and naming themes, and
- (6) producing the final report (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Given the small sample included in this study the results are presented without minimal reference to participant demographics in order to preserve the anonymity of the informants, because even the smallest piece of contextual information may reveal the program in which they work.

3. Results and Discussion

Here we provide an overview of the job-demand categories, with illustrative quotes from participants.

3.1. Job Demands

Table 2 illustrates the five job-demand categories developed based on the experiences expressed by participants. The categories are organized in alphabetical order without any judgment on the importance of the demand.

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Table 2: Job-demand categories

Job demand	Definition
Expectations	Expectations placed on the educator internally or externally regarding their work performance
External	Demands placed on the educator by stakeholders outside the HEI such as the Deaf community, interpreting community or other professional organizations
Higher education institution (HEI) constraints	The organizational structures and policies that frame the teaching environment
Personal	Demands on individuals originating outside of the HEI, which may impinge on their work (e.g., family and continued education)
Workload	The specific job tasks sign language interpreter educators manage on a day-to-day basis

3.1.1 Expectations

Participants described various demands related to the expectations of different stakeholder groups. These demands included the expectations of the administration, colleagues, external bodies, and students, as well as the expectations they had of themselves. For example, the administration expects key performance indicators to be met, colleagues expect opportunities to collaborate, and students expect detailed feedback on all assignments. Professional interpreters who provide support to interpreter education programs as mentors expect mentees to be at a higher caliber than they often are, and, likewise, the Deaf community expects that graduates will be professionally ready to work upon graduation. Pat explained how the Deaf community keeps tabs on program graduates: “The deaf community is watching us. They look at how well prepared our graduates are. And if they are lousy, we will hear about it. We have a lot of pressure on us from the Deaf community to ‘dot our Is and cross our Ts’ so to speak.” Furthermore, participants seemed to have a great deal of expectation of themselves to perform well in their job because others depend on them—a sense of moral obligation. For example, one participant stated, “Deaf people’s lives are at stake, and we need to make sure our interpreters can handle it. Deaf people deserve better.” Another participant stated, “I could just do my job. You know, I could just do that. But ethically I can’t do that. Morally I can’t do it. I know I can do it better. I need to do the best that I can.” Although expectations in some cases may serve as motivating factors (motivation is considered a job resource), they also appear to be juggling such expectations with the other demands.

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3.1.2 External Entities

In addition to expectations, external entities such as the Deaf community, interpreting community, and professional organizations, (e.g., accrediting bodies) form another demand category. Mary suggests that these entities constitute a difference between interpreter education and other disciplines. She states, “You know most other college programs don’t have external communities to deal with.” In regards to the Deaf community she suggests motivation can derive from wanting to do the job well for Deaf people, but also explains how at times staff can become overinvolved in the politics of the Deaf community, which can become counterproductive.

Three participants expressed challenges with accreditation bodies because they often have influence over program curricula due to established requirements for accreditation. The participants reported that such requirements are often not in line with what they believed to be relevant and necessary for their students to be work ready. Thus in many ways it seems educators are forced to include what they believe to be counterproductive content to courses. In one case, a participant made an attempt to discuss concerns with the accrediting body; the concerns were not well received, so the participant must continue to meet the requirements of the external entity. This demand, although not the direct fault of the educator, demonstrates how many factors affect teaching and learning other than the teacher and student, and how the educator may need additional support to access the accreditation body to propose changes.

Yeah, it’s changing but the currently voluntary register that exists in [country]—has little or no input from people who actually know what interpreting is. I have been doing this for a little over 28 years and I can have knockdown, drag-em-out fights with colleagues about what interpreting is or isn’t but I won’t have it with people who know nothing about interpreting. To be lectured to, and talked at from people who are bureaucratic and regulatory but know nothing about the work is insulting—but it’s the context in which we exist. (Casey)

The requirements from [accrediting body] are that people who are assessing have to have the appropriate assessment qualification. So the people we think might be able to do the job become irrelevant and what is more relevant is the constraints that are put on us by the awarding body. (Courtney)

3.1.3 HEI Constraints

In addition to the external constraints that educators must navigate, they also have to contend with the constraints of the HEI in which they work. The structures, policies, program duration, student-contact hours, and key performance indicators (retention and graduation) are examples of this third demand category. The HES is the system in which educators operate. Therefore, educators are required to follow structures, policies and procedures to remain employed, even if these are not always in line with program goals. For example, grading structures set forth by HEIs can make it difficult for interpreting students to fail even though they may demonstrate inadequate skills. In one instance, an 80% was an A. The participant felt that a 50% pass rate was too low for students to advance through the program and eventually graduate with the level of skills required for work. Could a stricter grading policy in sign language interpreter education programs increase graduates’ professional readiness? In this case, only those who demonstrated a higher standard of skills would be able to advance through the program. One participant explained that in a particular HEI, students often do not have their marks back from one semester until the fourth week of the following semester. Therefore, some students enter more advanced classes when they have not yet passed foundational classes (e.g., prerequisites). In this case students are more likely to be out of their zone of proximal development as described by Vygotsky (1987), creating a larger gap for educators to scaffold students to the appropriate level. The same participant described policies around failing students that also placed constraints on their work: The educator must document every fail through a formal report to justify it, as well as offer the student an opportunity to sit for reassessment. Policies may be seen to threaten educator autonomy, a quality of education that has historically been valued (Berdahl, 1990; Beck & Young 2005). Also, this type of

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policy adds additional work to the already extensive workload educators' carry. Educators tried to communicate these challenges to the administration, with disappointing results:

We say why it's not working. But it's just the way it is. We give them pedagogical reasons, we are giving them reasons in terms of student outcomes and all these kinds of things and they go, 'Yeah this is the way it is' and it's like, 'Okay, thanks for that.' It's not just me, you know, colleagues both inside my school and outside my school have the same issue. (Casey)

Another clear concern amongst participants was student enrolment. Whether student numbers relate more to the administrative expectations or an established program policy appeared to vary amongst the participant experiences and merits further investigation. However, in some cases it was clear that in order to keep programs operating, enrolment had to reach a set minimum number of students. A participant stated:

We get the money from student tuition and an allotment from the college to run the program itself. We have a certain percentage of our budget that goes to the library and the administration. Each program is supposed to give 33% to the college. We never can give 33% because we have small numbers. But yes, they give us money and the tuition together. There is a complicated formula but it does come down to student numbers. I know it has to do with how many staff we have teaching, what the numbers are, etc. I am not too familiar with it. But we get less money in tuition because we have less students. That money comes down to paying everything from staff salaries, staff benefits to lights. It's a bit unfortunate in a sense—you want less than the 30 students to effectively teach them, but your funds are based on tuition. So if you wanted to get more money to invest into the program you would need to accept more students but you can't do that because high numbers have negative effects on students. (Jesse)

Similarly, another participant explained:

Due to funding [requirements] and the higher education system we are forced to have specific numbers. I mean, without those numbers our program can't run. Every year, we accept 30 students into the program. We then split the 30 students into two cohorts. Each cohort has 15 students. That is an agreement that we have made with the college. We know that 15 is beyond the recommendation² and still high, but there is nothing we can do about it and that is simply the agreement that we have made. (Jesse)

Because HEIs depend on program enrolment and student retention numbers for funding and course availability, educators reported that they often preferred to offer support intervention and pass rather than fail students who demonstrate academic risk and are borderline pass/fail. However, if interpreting students continue to enter the workforce underprepared, these support interventions may not be strong enough for learners to achieve the level of skill they need within the program's time frame.

We in the program know the student can't interpret, is not going to be successful, but we can't lose all of our students so we handle it by increasing support to the students where we can. Now sometimes, we do go ahead and fail them but we will offer them opportunities to audit the course, provide tutoring support, etc. There is a lot of pressure on us to keep the students and not fail them for the sake of program numbers. (Jesse)

A lack of consistent student numbers may cause a program to run intermittently, to ensure enough students in each cohort. Because of this, students are limited in their choice of classes each term, and if they fail a course there is no guarantee the same course will be offered immediately for retaking. The participant describing this particular constraint explained that because a student would not be able to retake the course for another year, "we tend to give people borderline passes when we want to give them the message they are not doing well. But I feel

² The American Sign Language Teachers Association recommends an class size of 8–20 students for optimal instruction, with class size depends upon level and nature of instruction. See <https://www.aslta.org/resources/instructional-class-sizes/>

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that there are some times we should fail more students and we don't". The demand of educators to pass and graduate poor students may offer another explanation why many graduates lack professional readiness.

'One size fits all' HEI student policies and structures do not necessarily align with the requirements of the communities in which students will work upon graduation. For some educators, their HEI conditions and structures make their work more challenging than it needs to be. This finding supports an earlier comments from experienced interpreter educator and researcher Betsy Winston (2005), who has suggested that sign language interpreter educators simply continue to do what they do because they are told to, and not because it is the right thing to do:

In spite of years of teaching interpreting, in spite of curriculum changes, in spite of recognized failure to adequately educate interpreters, we continue to do what we do. We accept students into interpreting programs because we are told to, ignoring evidence that this does not result in competent interpreters. We graduate students into the community, acknowledging they are not qualified, that there is a gap, and that they need at least a year or two to achieve even entry level competence. (p. 231)

3.1.4 Job-Demand: Personal

The participants in this study made some reference to their personal lives. Juggling family commitments and continued educational and professional pursuits outside the HEI is part of the sign language interpreter educator experience. At times the responsibilities that come with personal factors can interfere with managing their work demands. Rachel stated, "I have to focus on my family and the reality is this [marking] is so time consuming and requires so much effort that cutting that off lets me take care of my family." Another participant had to take leave due to a death in the family; educators taking any kind of leave exacerbates the staffing challenges for the HEIs. Two participants referenced putting their personal commitments on hold to better juggle workload; one participant could not pursue continuing education (a form of professional development identified as a job resource) due to workload.

3.1.5 Job-Demand: Workload

The extensive workload of educators in HE has been widely documented in the literature (see Soliman & Soliman, 1997; Houston et al., 2006; Melin et al., 2014). Therefore, it is no surprise that the roles and responsibilities described by the interpreter educator participants in this study were vast. Jesse explained, "People are constantly giving me more tasks and all of those tasks have deadlines and I can't keep up. They wonder why I am behind, but they don't recognize what's already on my plate." Nineteen tasks were identified:

1. Accreditation and administrative paperwork
2. Admission screenings
3. Academic board and committee participation
4. Creating new lesson plans
5. Creating new course
6. Curriculum review and development
7. Developing community partnerships
8. Hiring and recruitment
9. Marking, grading, and assessing students
10. Meeting with students

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11. Office maintenance
12. Practicum and field experience coordination
13. Program coordination and development
14. Providing feedback to students
15. Research commitments
16. Resource development
17. Seeking funding for program enhancement (e.g. resource development, staffing, and research)
18. Supervising staff
19. Teaching

It should be noted that although there are similar practices across all disciplines (e.g., lesson planning, teaching and researching), each field has unique requirements for delivering an effective academic experience to students. Participants described several roles and responsibilities that may be specific to sign language interpreter educators; they elaborated on some of the tasks listed above more extensively than others. For example, all participants described the enormous amount of time they spent marking/grading and providing feedback to students. The assessment processes in sign language and interpreter education courses may be more time-consuming than in courses where marking consists of evaluating written work using an answer key because most interpreting assignments and exams are filmed, and instructors must watch and analyse videos to provide detailed feedback on interpreting skills. For example, Jesse continued:

I have told the administration about the workload. But it doesn't matter, the system has been created with the idea that teachers mark essays, process scantrons in a machine, etc. There was a workload form that was sent out for us to fill out. Marking videos was not there. The amount of hours our team spends on marking is unimaginable.

Jesse explained how one assignment for one class took approximately 22 hours of time to mark. Rachel noted that it could take her an hour to mark one 5-minute video clip. To try to cut down on student assessment, her program has implemented a new strategy of assessing work with the students during 1-hour one-to-one meetings:

I don't know how many holidays I've given up to share my time with student videos. . . . Instead of me being at home with my computer where I'm rewinding, watching parts, going forward to rewind again- I have one hour cause then I have another student coming in. Start to finish my whole grading process and feedback takes one hour, per student, per assignment. Whereby before it might take an hour and a half, 2 hours and I wasn't sure really that they would understand what I meant. Even if I signed my feedback, or I said my feedback, and by the time I gave them that feedback they were already moving on to the next one. So when I gave it back, I found out that so they weren't really actually necessarily all that motivated to even look at it, understand or try to apply it. (Rachel)

Rachel appears excited about this new assessment process, but a single assessment for each student in a class of 15 would still require two full days of work; and many educators teach more than one class. Some participants described making decisions about how much work they assign to students, and in one case an educator reduced student workload, limiting how much feedback students receive from the educator directly. Pat describes his experience: "I often think about cutting homework. But it's not right to do, so I don't. I want them to be able to do well and have the practice opportunities but it's just exhausting." Certainly the number of classes one educator teaches and how many students in each class varies, yet, feedback and formative assessment are critical to teaching and learning (Higgins et al. 2002) in general and necessary components of sign language interpreter educators' work.

Workload does appear to have affected the participants' energy levels and job performance, a phenomena supported by current literature (Jex, 1998; Bakker et al., 2004) suggesting that employee exhaustion levels can diminish available energy sources which limit energy supplies needed to invest in work and that can therefore

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contribute to ineffective job performance. Additionally, within Job Demand-Resource theory working conditions will initiate two distinct process, an energy-driven process, associated with job demands, and a motivation-driven process, associated with job resources (Baker et al., 2003; Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). One participant described that their passion for making a difference in students' lives remains, but it requires more energy than it did before. Casey stated, "It takes more energy just to have that [passion]. And you know, I'm not meek but it still sucks. You would like to be more interesting. I had all of these grand hopes during the last module. I did some things that were just a bit different, but I just didn't have the time or the energy, you know?" Similarly, Pat states, "Within the first month of teaching I have the energy. But as time goes on it just fades." It appears then that workload, an identified job demand, is not being managed due to insufficient time, which is an identified job resource, and thus is affecting these interpreter educators to the point of losing their passion and energy. This leads us to consider what job resources were identified by interpreter educators that may alleviate these demands.

3.2. Job Resources

Table 3 shows job-resource categories identified during the interviews. The 10 resource categories were by participants as ones they have and employ, or ones don't have but need when managing job demands. These resource categories have been ordered alphabetically. It should be noted there is some overlap within identified job-resource categories.

Table 3: Job Resources categories

Job Resources	Definition
Administration/Management	Expertise, support and management style of the HEI
Classroom/Teaching materials	Books, videos, and technological equipment educators use to deliver courses.
Program components	Curriculum
Facilities	Buildings, classrooms, labs, offices
Financial resources	Program-specific funding; salary
Human resources	Staffing
Motivation	Internal and external factors that keep the educators going
Professional development	Feedback through appraisal and evaluation as well as training received through conference, seminar and workshop attendance
Support	Physical and emotional support the educators receive personally or professionally
Time	Time available to complete job tasks.

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3.2.1 Job Resource: Administration/Management

Participants identified a supportive and understanding administration or management team as an important resource. Some participants felt it was difficult to meet job demands when administrators were not fully understanding of the nature of the sign language interpreting profession or of sign language interpreter education some participants. One participant commented that those outside the profession in management roles might not have the same understanding or expectations:

Administration is a challenge for us. They don't really understand what interpreting is. I have to say, it has gotten better through the years. But there have been times that they just didn't understand why our numbers were so small, why so many students were failing, or struggling. The administration just doesn't understand our program, the field of interpreting and what it actually takes to become an interpreter, they don't understand Deaf Culture, [sign language], why we have small classes etc. So we have spent a lot of time trying to educate the administration. (Jesse)

Another participant described experiences with an overbearing supervisor who threatened program closure based on low student numbers. The program's initial enrolment was high, but graduation rates were not as robust; and "graduation rates definitely made us feel threatened, we only graduate about 4 or 5 of the 10 who enter the interpreting program." Similarly, Sandy stated that the HEI could "cut the program at any time because the numbers are so small and will always be small." Although the complexities of interpreting tasks may be clear to sign language interpreter educators, who may not expect all students who enter the program to successfully exit if they do not meet the requirements of the profession.

Another participant described wanting to discuss fiscal concerns or other program related matters with the administration but being refused. Pat clearly expressed frustration about working in such an environment:

I would ask if I could discuss fiscal concerns and the answer was always no. I could not respond negatively to the administration, but unfortunately I did not have access to bring other concerns and complaints to them and it was all really uncomfortable. (Pat)

A lack of supportive administration/management may affect interpreter educators' overall wellbeing and work experience. However, some participants reported positive experiences with supportive and knowledgeable administrations, describing the benefit of a supportive work environment not only for themselves personally, but also for the program. Pat describes the change in administration:

Our new administration seems to understand. This has been good and it goes to show it matters who is in charge. The new administrator wants students to do well and if they are not doing well, he believes they shouldn't continue. This is an exciting change. Finally, someone who gets it!

On a similar note, Katie states:

It's helpful if the people who are administering the program, maybe not delivering the program, actually have some sense of what the program is about and why it needs to be resourced the way it is. For example in [name of country] there is a quota of how many bums on seats are required before a course gets cut but in our field they allow things to run with 15 students, or even 10 students, which would never happen in any other course of the college.

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When the administration is interested and involved, participants reported that resources are purchased, funds are allocated to the program and there is an overall sense to key stakeholders that the HEI was invested in the best interests of the program.

3.2.2 Job Resource: Classroom/Teaching materials

Physical resources such as books and videos are widely available in the United States more limited in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Although ASL is used in Canada, both Canadian participants stressed the need to have access to classroom/teaching materials developed in that country:

We have limited resources from Canada and a lot of our resources are coming from America, which is fine but we definitely need to have more resources developed out of Canada. Specifically for teaching ASL and interpreting skills. This means we end up developing our own materials. We have to film ourselves, creating scenarios for the students to work with. Mock interviews, etc.

Most of our materials have been made in America. We have some materials of our own, but I really would like to see more Canadian-developed materials. Especially in relation to our language classes . . . I say this because the materials we have seem to include so many regional variations, and when you are teaching you are constantly having to stop and clarify what is American and that gets frustrating . . . There has been a lot of discussion about the development of it, but at the end of the day, who is going to do it? I don't have time to do it . . .

Having to create essential texts and videos to share with students adds to educators' workloads. On the other hand, one participant commented that good educators make successful programs and the lack of materials is in fact negligible, that "a good educator can manage, make do and improvise." However, if graduates are not work ready, managing, making do and improvising are not enough, especially considering interpreter educators' extensive. Participants from the United States noted that although there are plenty of resources there is no time (a job-resource category) to review new resources and identify which ones are best suited for a well sequenced, scaffolded curriculum.³

3.2.3 Job Resource: Program Components

Course curriculum is a core, necessary component of interpreter education programs. Most participants saw inadequacies in their current curricula and felt they needed review and further development. Pat stated, "There has been a lot of discussion about the development of it [curriculum], but at the end of the day, who is going to do

³ Bruner and Ross (1976) developed the term *scaffolding*, as a metaphor to describe interactional talk between learners and skilled others. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, suggests intelligence is better understood as what a learner could do with the help of skilled others (see Cameron, 2001, p. 6). Initially learners may rely heavily on the help of others; they gradually shift towards greater independence as they acquire skills and knowledge for themselves. *Sequencing* is the explicitly arranged activities to support overall learning. Therefore, a sequenced sign language interpreting program curriculum includes an intentional order of courses where learners can be scaffolded from learner (dependent) to professional (independent).

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it? I don't have time to do it between teaching and coordinating. We would have to bring someone from the outside in that we pay in order to develop what we need." Most participants suggested a well-developed curriculum would strengthen their programs and enhance teaching and learning. Although having to develop curriculum has implications for workload (a job demand), a fully developed curriculum can serve as a functional instructional guide to support teaching and learning:

We need a curriculum for sure. We have so many amazing materials. But nothing that's scaffolded, and spiraled and reinforced and so that's great and it's almost like hold off with the materials. The goal of a good program is that it's well developed from beginning to end, right? And that students have time to take it in, and practice it, and master a skill before they move on. That is not my reality. Right? So, maybe we need to back up, and really create that well scaffolded, well sequenced, well developed curriculum with opportunities for students to master each part of it... and pilot it and see where it works, and see how far we get, and see how long we really need rather than here's what we got and then lets make the program fit within these constraints. And then how long is it going to take? How many hours would it really take to do it right? I don't know. I mean—I don't know of a curriculum out there at all. Yeah, I want to work on this. This is one of the things I want to do. I would love to develop a curriculum that's designed to help interpreters move from beginning to end. (Rachel)

3.2.4 Job Resource: Facilities

Facilities are buildings, offices, classrooms and labs available for teaching and self-study. Participants reported a variety of experiences regarding HEI facilities. For example, language labs are facilities that educators can incorporate into activity lesson planning while also providing students with increased opportunities to learn outside the classroom (Stepp-Greany, 2002; Gorm, Hansen & Shlesinger, 2007). Sandy appeared excited describing a newly refurbished sign language interpreting lab, which would make a difference in the delivery of the program "Our interpreting program is beyond what most programs are. We have a pretty nice lab, and we are getting a new lab starting in the fall that's going to be even bigger and better so we have great facilities". On the other hand, some participants described labs as unavailable to them or not meeting technical requirements of sign language interpreting students; in such cases, student-learning experiences are more limited. In addition to lab spaces, Mary expresses disappointment that her HEI does not have enough office spaces for staff to be housed in a shared building, which can increase collaboration opportunities and reduce feelings of isolation: "Right now we have six offices all together. The part-time teachers also have a space. They share an office. When we get our seventh person we will be maxed out and will have to find this person another office, which will be in another building. This is unfortunate because they will be separated from the team."

3.2.5 Job Resource: Financial

Financial resources serve as the major structural backbone to interpreter education programs. It is the funding that supports many other job resources; therefore, this category does have overlap. Funding supports overarching program costs, including human resources, job resources and staffing (see Section 3.2.7). Participants expressed a need for more funding, with needs varying from increasing human resources to improving facilities and resource development. Casey described paying guest lecturers out of pocket when the HEI could not provide: "I bring people in who are going to help us, and they need to be remunerated. If the university is not going to do it, I'm going to do it." Courtney felt that continuously asking interpreters in the community to volunteer as mentors was becoming more and more difficult, and a small pot of money to remunerate them for their time would be advantageous:

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Students need access to professional interpreters. [We need] more access to those people without feeling like you are asking something over and above, something that is acceptable to those interpreters, without them wanting to be paid, there is not much money for that.

Many of the participants are engaging with work they personally are not remunerated for. Some are juggling roles and responsibilities of program coordinators although they have only been hired as teaching staff. Katie was hired as a contractor but often works directly with the HEI to help coordinate, because there is actually no full-time staff to work on the program. Rachel is the only full-time staff member who teaches within the interpreting program; each semester, she fears that one of the contractors will decide not to come back because of the extensive workload. She specifically noted that no funding is available to increase staff:

We just went through a pretty serious budget crisis and we seem to be coming out on the other end of it. But we had many full-time people retire and they didn't fill those positions so right now we have a higher portion of [contractors] for the classes, than we did say 8 years ago. We are pretty much in agreement that we need another full-time interpreting teacher first, second we need another ASL teacher...then we send that up to the governing board. Then the governing board and senate and all the other divisions look at it and all the other departments and they determine first, second, third and then administration decides how many faculty are going to be hired.

Despite staff submitting formal requests year after year, the HEI has not allocated funding for an additional position. Therefore, if funding allocation is tied to program enrolment and program enrolment in sign language interpreter education programs remains small, it may always remain a challenge for programs to receive funding to add an additional line for teaching to their budget—that is, funding and staffing/human resources are closely connected.

3.2.6 Job Resource: Human Resources

Human resources include the personnel directly supporting the program (e.g., administrative, teaching, research assistants, lab assistants, etc.) Although two participants reported being satisfied with their current situation regarding teaching staff, six participants described concerns in having too few full-time staff and needing to rely on contractors to fill teaching gaps. A few participants expressed not only feeling overwhelmed with workloads to manage on their own, but also sensing that using contractors, instead of hiring full-time staff, has had negative implications for the program as well as for student learning. Mary stated, “You need to have full-time professors at a [HEI]. If not the classes become just classes for monetary gain and the teachers are not focused on the university goals.” Another participant elaborated:

Of course we want more permanent staff, but because of our small numbers we can't get any more. Contractors are here to teach their assigned classes and only that. They are not here on a daily basis and that has an impact on student success as well. . . . But for program consistency, curriculum development, teaching strategies, contractors are not here on a daily basis to be involved in that. They aren't paid for it. They are paid to teach their courses and that's it. They are not paid for meetings with the students, not paid for the hours spent on marking assignments, not paid for preparing materials, and that impacts students for sure. I wish we had more permanent staff. I have a good group of contractors but it would be more beneficial to have additional full-time staff to do those things I mentioned, such as enhancing our curriculum, create additional resources, etc. But the college has turned down our requests and so we fill the gaps using the contractors. (Jesse)

Jesse went on to clarify that the contractors are not unqualified individuals but that students have limited access to them because they are not on campus regularly to provide additional support. Full-time educators can

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invest more in students and programs. Education literature documents the negative impact that contingent or adjunct (casual) employees can have on student performance (Wyles, 1998; Monroe & Denman, 1991; Johnson, 2011).

3.2.7 Job Resource: Motivation

Motivation consists of the internal and external factors that motivate individuals to continue doing what they do. Studies show that employees who are motivated are more engaged in their work and provide higher levels of job performance (Bakker et al., 2004; Rich et al., 2010). The participants in this study showed several areas of motivation that pushed them to work hard. We believe that the sense of personal and professional responsibility they expressed is unique to the field of sign language interpreters:

We are preparing students more effectively and some are making it and some are getting it and so and if we don't then the repercussions are huge. You know the consequences are horrifying because these people [students] are going to work with our friends, and our colleagues and our children, right? (Rachel)

Because interpreter educators do have ties to the external communities in which their students eventually serve, they may have a different level of motivation that pushes them to invest time and energy into their work, as they receive indirect feedback on their graduates through their community relationships. They work long hours and juggle job demands because they are motivated by the goal that their students will be able to provide quality interpreting services to the Deaf community upon graduation:

So sure, as a teacher we could take the perspective that it's too much work to plan and carry out these external learning experiences. But we know they will have impact. To not do them will really have repercussions. So much depends on the energy and the motivation of the teacher (Mary)

Participants also noted that their own reputation could be on the line if their students do not provide such quality services to the community:

It's also uncomfortable when a student leaves a program and they haven't taken it on board what you taught. . . . They are one of mine [and] they have [my] label on them; I've been responsible for them. I am obviously not the only person responsible for them but that brings pressure and is still uncomfortable now. (Courtney)

It should be noted that the identity of the sign language interpreter educator is important to the Deaf community. According to Moore and Levitan (2003), Deaf people *will* ask students the name of their teacher for two reasons: (a) curiosity and (b) to tell students if their teacher is considered 'good' or 'bad.' Moore suggests these judgments are made by knowing the teacher's qualifications, their attitude, or may be political (e.g., a personal grudge). Considering the importance of the educator's reputation within the Deaf community, if many students are graduating without professional readiness, the Deaf community may believe this to be a direct reflection of the educator rather than the institution in which the program is housed.

Participants were also clearly motivated by wanting to serve the students to the best of their ability. They appeared regretful in not giving more time to support students. One participant compared students to becoming the children of the educators. And like parents want children to succeed and will do anything they can to enable that, the educators want their students to succeed in the same way and will try to find additional support, mentoring,

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peer support whenever possible. Mary describes the importance of these additional supports: “You know, we select 15 or 16 into our program they are our babies and we need to do everything in our power to keep them developing and make sure they have everything they need to practice...they are our babies.” Additionally, three participants shared the joy they experience when students return to say thank you and share their professional successes and it is these success stories that keep them wanting to work hard. Rachel states, “There are former students from the our program all over the world doing research, and teaching and getting faculty positions and interpreting in schools with kids who are going to grow up and make some difference becoming leaders in these deaf organizations. The rewards are so high.”

This motivation for their students to succeed appears to provide a deeper understanding of how participants sustain their workloads.

3.2.8 Job Resource: Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is the way in which employees develop and maintain their professional (in this case interpreting and teaching) skills. PD can include attending training through conferences, workshops and seminars; working in collaboration with peers through team teaching and peer mentorship; and receiving feedback from students and other structured performance appraisals (Desimone et al., 2002). Many participants felt that PD was a much-needed resource. Not all HEIs provide funding opportunities for educators to attend such events; often, funding is limited or not available. Pat shares this as a concern: “The other thing that is a bit of an issue, [the HEI] doesn’t fund us to go to conferences.” In many cases training was mainly supported through personal funds. Additionally, due to the nature of sign language interpreting being a specialized discipline, participants explained the difficulties in finding mentors to observe their teaching and provide feedback. In many cases this is difficult internally because staffing is limited, and therefore there is no one available. One Deaf participant described the last time a person observed a class delivered in sign language: “She couldn’t sign. She was just watching my interaction with the students. There was no interpreter. Really, since then no one has watched me teach.” In other disciplines it may be easier to collaborate across disciplines and discuss teaching strategies, yet this is often not possible when working within language fields because those observers need to also hold that language skill. Sign language interpreter education is a small field in general, which makes an even smaller ‘tier’ of senior or advanced practitioners to call upon. It is clear that the interpreter educators in our study do want to develop professionally:

Up until this point I have never been able to be evaluated by another interpreter educator or by somebody who could give me that type of input. There are no other full-time interpreter educators at my campus. I asked if I could have an adjunct person evaluate me and that hasn’t worked out. I have never received feedback or been evaluated by a peer who is in my field. (Rachel)

Some participants are currently continuing in education, while others are making plans to do so. One participant noted that many of the staff members teaching in the program are behind on current theories and practices surrounding the field of sign language interpreter education, and they do in fact need training. However, there is no funding for PD and the staff members are not always willing to personally invest in it:

Sometimes, one person on the staff will be able to go, but we can’t all go. And the teachers need more education relating to interpreting. Sure they know some of the theories, but some are just not keeping up to date with the current literature. (Pat)

Another participant expressed the willingness to engage with new literature to keep up to date on best practices, but admitted that without enough time, teaching content and delivery will remain static until more time is available.

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3.2.9 Job Resource: Support

The support that employees receive within and outside the workplace is very important for well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Chay, 1993). Participants in our study, noted varied experiences of support. Some said they recognized the importance of support from colleagues but struggled to find it, because of other constraints such as the lack of human resources and time, Sandy shared: “When [name] and I used to work together we would give collegial feedback, which was great. But [now] there is no one around to do that with.” Therefore, without the opportunity to collaborate, sign language educators feel isolated, as well as unsupported by their administration (see Section 3.2.2) External supports were not overtly discussed however, literature does show that personal networks can serve as a support system (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Zimet et al., 1988).

3.2.10 Job Resource: Time

Time as a resource represents the amount of time needed to manage workload tasks. Participants appeared to believe that if more time were available to them, they would better manage job demands, therefore improving learning experiences for students:

The fact that I don't have or feel like I have the time to be creative or innovative is going to have an impact on students. I'd love to have more—be more interesting, be more creative with stuff as opposed to let's take out the PowerPoint from last year tweak a few things, change the lecture notes, change the dates. (Casey)

Throughout the interview process participants made reference to needing more time to collaborate and meet as a team; develop, modify and prepare innovative courses; grow and enhance programs; research, publish and disseminate information; review and seek available resources and/or develop new ones; stay current with literature and best teaching practices; strengthen and improve curricula. Without enough time to manage their workload, it appears many of these participants are ‘just getting by’ and their job performance is not optimal:

If I had one thing my teaching would be better. Hmm. I think time. With the workload I carry, I don't have enough time. I don't have enough time to create new lessons, seek out new resources, develop new activities etc. I simply do not have enough time. The classes I teach sometimes are lacking and we get by. (Jesse)

These insights provoked the following questions: (a) If educators are just “getting by”, what type of example does that set for students' practice? (b) What type of impact does this have on student learning outcomes, including work readiness? (c) If the participants in this study do not feel they have enough time to do their job effectively, can students fully develop the knowledge skills and abilities they need? Participants suggested that without a reduction in workload or additional time, increasing human resources may be the best strategy for helping them to manage job demands.

4. Limitations of the Study

Before concluding the report of this qualitative scoping study of sign language interpreter educators' perceptions of job demands and job resources, and discussing the implications of the findings, it is necessary to acknowledge some of the potential limitations of the study.

Sample size: The sample size of this study was small (eight participants, two from each country). However it has high construct validity because it draws on established literature while also demonstrating internal

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validity, because participants mentioned similar issues showing they have many common experiences (Hale & Napier, 2013)

Program variation: This study included a variety of program types: postgraduate, undergraduate, diploma and certificate. Program types will inevitably lead to different program level outcomes and therefore the experiences reported by the participants related to job demands and resources will vary. For example, teachers working with students with previous interpreting experience in a postgraduate program will have clearly different experiences than those teaching groups of students entering undergraduate programs with no previous interpreting experience.

Analytical approach: Even though the data translator is a Certified American Sign Language Interpreter, who has been signing for over 15 years, when translating ASL data into English there is inherent subjectivity in the translation choices made (Young & Temple, 2014; Stone & West, 2012). Thus it is important to recognise that there may be some bias in the interpretation of the data, because the translation may have skewed subtleties presented in the ASL source text.

5. Conclusions

All participants in our study perceived that their performance does have an impact on their students' learning outcomes and student success, although the type of impact certainly varies among students and programs. Although this study did not attempt to measure the impact of sign language interpreter educators' job demands and resources on students' learning outcomes and professional readiness, future research should explore this link. Considering job demand–resource theory, if educators do not have resources to manage job demands, they may experience weakening job performance and even burnout. Thus, understanding sign language interpreters' overall well-being is critical to a better understanding of why students continue to graduate without the minimal requirement of skills needed to practice.

Sign language interpreter educators participating in this study expressed high job demands and low/limited resources. Many of the interviewees experienced high levels of exhaustion and stress, as well as burnout, which is a similar finding to studies of other occupations exploring implications of high demands and low resources on employee well-being (see Bakker et al., 2007; Bakker et al., 2005). However, participants were passionate about their work, which appeared to serve as a motivating factor. Although many of these factors may also apply to educators in other educational disciplines there are a few areas that appear unique to sign language interpreter education: the extra time and attention required for marking visual assignments; the scarcity of educational materials in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as highly regarded resources sequenced to best scaffold learners; constraints that national accreditation bodies have on sign language interpreter educators—what the educators want to teach and what accreditation bodies expect them to teach may not always align; and the presence of the Deaf community as a major stakeholder and influence over sign language interpreter education.

It is clear there is more to learn specifically about sign language interpreter educator job demands, job resources, overall well-being, and the ways in which interpreter educators perceive these factors as influencing their job performance and overall student learning outcomes. However, this initial study clearly demonstrates that experiences of sign language interpreter educators (positive and negative) are rooted within the nature of the HEI (e.g., the level of the support from the administration, whether or not program needs are met), and that sign language interpreter educators, situated in their current social reality of HES, are in what they can achieve. Therefore, additional examination of how interpreter educators perceive their reality as potentially influencing their job performance and student learning outcomes will be a beneficial addition to research previously conducted on the readiness-to-work gap.

Seeing how research has primarily focused on sign language interpreters, students and interpreter pedagogy, the findings in this scoping study confirmed that there is a need to further examine interpreter educators within the

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context of the HES. What role do HEIs have in relation to student learning outcomes? What obligation do they have to ensure that interpreter educators are prepared to not only face the demands of the job, but to equip students to facilitate accurate communication exchanges in a variety of settings? Understanding student learning and professional readiness should not be limited to student ability and interpreter profile, where predominantly scholars have focused their research, but should also include HEIs, sign language interpreter education programs, and educators. If higher education has been built around fostering students to become autonomous and reflective learners who hold knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully transition into the interpreting profession, the role of HEIs must also be explored and not just the currently working interpreters. Considering that the professional sign language interpreting system is linked to the HES, it is important to note that constraints in the HES influence how the sign language interpreter education system functions. That graduates leave HEIs to work as professional interpreters without the necessary skill sets shows a breakdown in both systems. We hope that sharing the experiences of sign language interpreter educators highlights the reality of the HES and how this system influences the interpreter educators within it, and in turn, student learning outcomes.

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