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An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University

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Josephine E. Heyl

St. Catherine University

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Abstract

Research of higher education has found that disabled faculty and students are often categorized by their disability, while other aspects of their identity are forgotten, misunderstood, and invalidated. When considering policy making in higher education, these individuals are infrequently invited to conversations of policy making and systemic decision making. With a feminist theoretical framework, this study examines the interpreting policy at St. Catherine University through the lens of stakeholder experience and perspective. Data was collected from participants through a survey and virtual interviews. Knowledge was found as an underlying connection between the five narrative themes: familiarity with interpreting policy, discrepancies of experience v. procedure, positive perspectives of change, communication concerns, and disempowerment. It is eventually suggested that the information lacking in policy corresponds almost entirely with what is lacking in stakeholder knowledge and understanding. This study ends with a call for explicit stakeholder involvement in policy creation and maintenance.

Keywords: Higher education, policy, interpreting, deaf, stakeholder

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Impetus

To best understand how this research study was conceived, it is important the reader first understand the history and positionality of this researcher. I first attended St. Catherine University as an undergraduate student in the Fall of 2011 without much more than a fleeting idea of a future profession or career. I quickly found myself fascinated by American Sign Language (albeit superficially, as a young white, female, cis-gender, able-bodied, sighted, hearing individual), while taking my first course and interacting with my first deaf¹ professor. I found my world flipped upside down as my understanding and passions for social justice grew alongside a daily unpacking of my own privileges with every course taken. I graduated with a BA in Interpreting in the Spring of 2015. After a few years of working as an interpreter in various capacities, I found myself once again pulled back to St. Kate's, but in the role of the Program Coordinator/Interpreter for the ASL & Interpreting Department.

This position was challenging for a number of reasons, but of note is how it ultimately shattered (what I like to call) the St. Kate's "purple-colored" glasses I had been wearing since that first day back in 2011. After shifting out of the student role, I soon learned that like every other system, St. Kate's has its own share of issues that many folks, in many ways, were working to address. My own experience with this system came in the form of the management of interpreting services, when I personally took on the responsibility of coordinating interpreters for various faculty and University needs up until an official interpreter coordinator position was

¹ "We write *deaf* with a lowercase "d" because we see *deaf* as more encompassing, less politicized, and less context-dependent than *Deaf*" (Friedner & Kusters, 2015, p. ix). Throughout this paper, *deaf* will be used to respect and honor all identities within the deaf community.

established. Through this challenging and truly overwhelming time I had a firsthand look into the systems and barriers in which these services function.

It is this long history with St. Kate's that drove the pursuit of this research topic. From student, to staff/interpreter, to graduate student, I have experienced the interpreting services at St. Catherine University from nearly every angle. After being accepted as a student to the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program, it is from this final position that I have been able to finally pursue an investigation of these systems more than any of my previous roles allowed.

Statement of the Problem

While institutions often espouse words like inclusion, equity, and diversity, there is no standard of policy that keeps universities accountable for their policy development and decision-making surrounding access and interpreting services. It could be stated that while positive words are often promoted, the foundational policies of institutions do not necessarily support these sentiments. It is therefore essential that stakeholders be involved in the development, establishment, and maintenance of interpreting policies in higher education institutions.

When considering the standards universities are held to with regard to interpreting policies, it's important to understand the foundational laws currently in place. There are federal laws that address the issue of accessibility in the educational setting, starting with The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of this law states: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...." (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, p. 142). Due to federal financial aid, this means private and public colleges alike cannot

discriminate against students with disabilities. While this law was a step in the direction of access, it does not explicitly state standards of accessibility and expectations for universities beyond not discriminating against students with disabilities.

Now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was established in 1975. This law addressed some of the gaps identified in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, guaranteeing free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities.

Unfortunately, this law does not apply to college level studies. This means that the individual education plans (IEPs) and 504 plans a student with disabilities may have had in high school will not carry over into their higher education experience.

Beyond Section 504 and IDEA, universities are required to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Passed in 1990 and amended in 2008, the ADA prohibits discrimination of persons with disabilities in the public sector. In this case, institutions are required to be accessible, and accommodations are to be provided as necessary (“The Americans with Disabilities Act and Your Rights as a College Student,” 2019). Again, this law does not explicitly state expectations for what accessibility should look like in the higher education environment. One of the most prominent organizations in this area is the Association for Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). This organization aims to address the various barriers that arise in the University setting for individuals with disabilities (Association for Higher Education and Disability, 2021). Along with the Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability (JPED), AHEAD also approves of research projects that align with their organizational goals.

In their research of students with disabilities in 2012, Hutcheon and Wolbring established a framework of ableism linked to policy in higher education. Students with disabilities and

faculty alike experience a range of barriers and oppression in the university environment. Furthermore, these individual's stories are often boiled down to one aspect of their many faceted identities (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Robinson & Henner, 2018; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012).

In a similar vein, universities have been found to profit from disability-oriented ventures while neglecting the population of disabled students, faculty and staff on campus. In 2018, Robinson and Henner investigated this phenomenon with American Sign Language (ASL) courses. These courses have been known to be especially popular and therefore bring in a substantial amount of revenue to universities. With an incredible influx over recent years, "ASL is now the third most-taught language in the United States" (as cited by Robinson & Henner, 2018). Despite the large presence of ASL on college campuses, deaf individuals continue to face barriers in higher education environments.

When it comes to the actual creation of policy at the university-level the opinions of the disabled communities are infrequently considered. A poignant example to this study was the 1988 decision that chose a hearing candidate as the president of Gallaudet University over two deaf applicants (Shapiro, 1994). This selection was quickly overturned after deaf community outrage led to large protests in which a deaf individual, I. King Jordan, was eventually pronounced president (Hehir, 2002).

The research involving the topic of higher education access policy is somewhat limited. Much of the research thus far has focused on the larger issues of higher education systems, the experiences of people with disabilities in higher education, and the issue of systemic ableism.

Research Question

Research of higher education has found that disabled faculty and students are often categorized by their disability, while other aspects of their identity are forgotten, misunderstood,

and invalidated. When considering policy making in higher education, these individuals are infrequently invited to conversations of policy making and systemic decision making. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective, specifically within the St. Catherine University community. In doing so, this research aims to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

There is limited research in the realm of higher education in relation to interpreting and access policies. In an attempt to explore the many facets of this topic, starting with a foundational understanding of an institutional ethnographic approach to research in higher education, the research surrounding higher education policy, perspectives of individuals with disabilities, and ableism are examined. It is generally found that institutional ethnography focuses on the word of stakeholders and the context in which they reside. Higher education policy research has been investigated in various capacities, ultimately finding that disabled faculty and students face their own unique set of barriers. Additionally, despite the daily battle towards equity, disabled faculty, staff, and students are often forced to broach these topics. These individuals are then typically categorized by their disability, while other aspects of their identity are forgotten, misunderstood, and invalidated. While an interest is consistently made known, these individuals are also infrequently invited to conversations of policy making and systemic decision making.

Institutional Ethnography

Kearney, Corman, Johnston and Gormley (2019) explain that Dorothy Smith founded the institutional ethnographic (IE) approach to research, originating from a critique of her personal

experiences within the academics and parenthood. Smith emphasized that while we are to investigate the world, we should specifically look into how the world is put together in regard to ‘ruling relations’. Smith defines this term as the social relations that construct and guide our lives. Kearney et al. speak to the healthcare field, citing examples and the benefits institutional ethnography can provide. Specifically, they address how an institutional ethnographic approach to research encourages participants to reflect on ruling relations, to better understand their positionality within a given role and environment. Stemming from the concept of ruling relations, Rankin (2017) provides IE strategies for documenting information collected from interviews, specifically the strategies of mapping, indexing and writing accounts. Rankin states that,

in mapping work, the ruling relations are first tracked from the local work of people into the work of other people. Then, the goal is to lay out a display of what is happening (the map), either in words or diagrams, that describes the features of the social practices and their respective material forms and relationships. (p. 5)

Beyond this explanation, Rankin (2017) states that indexing allows researchers to further investigate the when, where, and who of information, understanding and identifying information within its specific context. Writing accounts then provides a chance for researchers to organize information into “analytic chunks”.

This work was specifically of note as it includes a list of cautions for individuals new to the IE approach to research. Rankin (2017) states common problems, including the misstep of combining an IE with other frameworks and approaches to research. They further caution researchers to be cognizant of their mindset and how they write their analysis. It should not be a description of their own journey through an environment or situation, but an analysis of the

institution and how it functions. Additionally, Rankin states the importance of allowing the data to speak for itself and readers to take what they will from the data. Ultimately, the researcher must be incredibly aware of their processes and thinking throughout the IE research. As this research study aims to unpack a system and how it functions from multiple perspectives, Rankin's work provides guidance and examples of effective uses of an institutional ethnographic approach to research.

Higher Education Policy

Both well known for their work in policy research in education, Conner and Rabovsky (2011) investigate policy in higher education, stating that,

as our country has become increasingly diverse, the importance of improving access and success to a quality education beyond high school for students of all backgrounds is especially important in addressing disparities in our society and growing gaps between the haves and have-nots. (p. 106)

They note three themes in higher education literature: research on accountability, affordability, and issues regarding access and equity. Within this discussion of higher education, there is mention of two categories of equity: vertical and intergenerational. In terms of policy, vertical equity addresses specific discrepancies, for example, an access policy for students with disabilities. Intergenerational equity on the other hand seeks to create equity across generations as times and circumstances change. Both of these concepts are specifically relevant when considering any policy but feel especially poignant for higher education and the ever-changing dynamic population of students, faculty and staff. Conner and Rabovsky (2011) further explain that both kinds of equity are often present and are not mutually exclusive.

In a similar vein, Epshteyn's dissertation (2019) delves into access policy in higher education and how, "accessibility of digital content in online learning to students with disabilities is one of the most widely discussed issues facing higher education in the United States" (p. 7). They were able to not only gather the perspectives of administrators but faculty members as well. While accessibility is seemingly valued by college institutions, faculty stated that they did not have adequate resources, tools, and appropriate staffing to make all content accessible. Epshteyn further explains their use of a Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), which ultimately seeks to gather educators perspectives on innovation, whether it be policy implementation or new programming. This approach is different from other research in this realm because it uses the CBAM approach for analysis and anonymous surveys as opposed to in-person interviews. Epshteyn explains that given the sensitivity of the topics discussed an anonymous survey was better suited.

Epshteyn's (2019) work is especially pertinent given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many adjustments higher education institutions have had to make to accommodate at-home learners. Similarly apt, Maguire (2009) investigated faculty perspectives on distance learning policy making in higher education. While literature up until that point had suggested otherwise, Maguire found that faculty indeed had interest in distance learning policy development and implementation. Faculty additionally stated that they did not want to be the sole stakeholders in these conversations, and instead encouraged student perspectives to be present within the process as well. With this in mind, Maguire mentions the power dynamics and political systems within higher education, stating that faculty expressed their lack of power and knowledge of the policy making procedures. They end their exploration with a number of recommendations, stating that faculty should be given a voice, involved regardless of on campus

v. online roles, student feedback inclusion, and consideration of greater contexts and complexities surrounding the policy.

Beyond providing a glimpse into the history of fragmented policy making in higher education, Parsons (2005), like Maguire (2009) above, speaks to the power dynamics within these systems and their influence on effective policy establishment. Parsons specifically describes three foundations of power: one created by society's definition of institutions and structure, the second from communication between the people making said policies and decisions, the third shaped from the values, principles, and beliefs of the community. Parsons additionally critiques the problem-solving of higher education institutions in relation to power. They state that policy decisions are often made on a foundation of assumptions that lead to contradictions in policy vs. philosophy. Different from the research mentioned above, Parsons work emphasizes a postmodern perspective when looking into policy, specifically acknowledging that,

a good beginning point in the application of a postmodern perspective is to accept that the meta narrative of access and equity that drove public support for higher education in the last half of the 20th century is gone. Accepting this, advocates can then begin to explore and play with the narratives that explain student aid, state higher education financing, desegregation, institutional positioning, technology, and the many other higher education policy arenas. (pp. 139-140)

As Maguire (2009) also emphasized, Parsons (2005) states the importance of understanding the power dynamics within policy making systems and structures.

Audism in Higher Education

In their research focusing on ableism in higher education, Hehir (2002) defines ableism through the work of Laura Rauscher and Mary McClintock (1996),

[Ableism is] a pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities... Deeply rooted beliefs about health, productivity, beauty, and the value of human life, perpetuated by the public and private media, combine to create an environment that is often hostile to those whose physical, mental, cognitive, and sensory abilities... fall out of the scope of what is currently defined as socially acceptable. (p. 198)

Shifting from the realm of ableism, Bauman's (2004) work establishes a history of audism.

Rather than the broad definition of ableism provided by Hehir (2002), Bauman explains the term "audism" stating that,

Deaf people have rarely been treated with the dignity that should come with being human. However, it was not until 1975 when a Deaf scholar, Tom Humphries, decided it was time to name the discrimination against Deaf persons and to coin a term that would be part of the currency of discussions on human rights, deaf education, and employment. But this newly minted term remains rarely used. (p. 239)

Furthering his point, Bauman (2004) examines the history of audism within three different frameworks: individual, institutional, and metaphysical. After exploring the individual and systemic presence of audism (often found in medical and educational settings), he speaks to the metaphysical orientation of audism in how human identity is often linked with speech. Beyond general definitions of audism as the discrimination of deaf people, Bauman provides an in-depth analysis of how ableism shows up in our societal and personal belief systems. It is this

understanding of audism that will be used throughout this research study. Also of note is the discussion of the power educational systems have over deaf individuals and the lack of input they have on the decision-making process within these systems. It is from this work and research alike where the question of stakeholder involvement in policy making arises.

Similarly, Stapleton (2015) focuses primarily on higher education and experiences of deaf individuals within this environment. This text initially gives context to the topic, providing background information about the deaf community and defining hearing privilege as, “...advantages or entitlements that are enjoyed by people who can hear which are denied to those who are Deaf,” (p. 57), further emphasizing the role hearing people play in the establishment of hearing-centric structures specifically within the academy. Examining barriers, misunderstandings, and frustrations that deaf faculty encounter, Stapleton specifically cites how they often struggle within the hearing dominated environment alongside the ongoing challenge of accessibility. Pertinent to this study is the number of barriers deaf faculty have been found to face with interpreting services. Deaf faculty often run into systemic barriers when attempting to progress through the academic hierarchy, which is often due to the consistent need, and therefore, ongoing cost of interpreting services. Not only that, but when services are confirmed, interpreters are often ill-equipped to voice interpret for deaf faculty with specialized fields of study.

Stapleton (2015) also mentions that education surrounding deaf culture, accessibility, and accommodations is frequently put on the shoulders of deaf faculty, often invalidating and overlooking their specialized knowledge base and identity. Furthermore, faculty perspectives are lacking in higher education research and deaf faculty perspectives alike are often not present. Given the frustrations expressed by faculty generally as mentioned earlier by Maguire (2009), it

is understandable that deaf faculty members would have reservations about policy making and their level of involvement in higher education systems and structures.

Providing an additional exploration into higher education and concerns of disability justice, Robinson and Henner (2018) speak to the contradictory popularity of American Sign Language (ASL) courses and lack of accessibility deaf individuals experience in the higher education environment. Specifically noted are the student numbers and profit ASL courses bring to institutions in conjunction with a lack of resources and support for students, faculty and staff with disabilities on campus. In fact, Davis (2015) noted that despite the passage of the American with Disabilities Act in 1990, a law prohibiting discrimination based on disability, lawsuits continued:

More than 25 colleges, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, MIT, Northwestern, Penn State, Ohio State University, and the University of California at Berkeley, have been sued or have had a complaint brought against them for not providing access or alternative formats for disabled students or closed captioning for deaf students. If such an abysmal record had been discovered for racial or gender discrimination, the academic world would be in an uproar. But since this is about disabled people, the abuses go unnoticed until lawsuits or complaints are brought — and even then there is no public outcry. (para.

11)

The specific disconnect between the benefits ASL courses bring to a university and the oppression persons with disabilities experience on campus is a clear demonstration of systemic oppression and ableism within higher education.

Interestingly, interpreting services themselves have been critiqued as a way for systems to check a box of inclusion and access, without considering direct communication as a valid and

feasible option. In their work from 2019, De Meulder and Hualand speak to the idea of the “illusion of inclusion”, critiquing interpreting services as a social institution. They specifically mention that,

in some situations, rather than serving ‘inclusion’ or ‘access,’ SLI [sign language interpreting] may become a smokescreen or veil, concealing language barriers, unequal language status, and service providers’ lack of awareness. Obviously, the issue of linguistic diversity and inequality is broader than just sign language interpreting. (p. 12)

This perspective is important to consider when assessing policy and what is considered truly accessible.

Conversely, Robinson and Henner (2018) emphasize the idea of “cripping” the university, explaining that, “to crip higher education is to intentionally create welcoming spaces for disabled students and faculty. It involves embracing disability scholarship and the study of disability across the curriculum” (para. 4). Additionally, in line with the concept of crippling the university is the concept of “deaf gain” originally coined by Bauman (2004) in which human diversity is specifically acknowledged and valued. This study clearly shows the need for further exploration and acknowledgement of the experiences of faculty, staff, and students with disabilities in higher education.

Hehir (2002) also speaks to the idea of ableism generally in education systems. They explain how most all of our educational structures have been created without disabled individuals in mind, therefore disabled children are at a distinct disadvantage from the very start. Contending with the concept of “deaf gain” described earlier, Hehir explains how our educational and developmental services become overly focused on overcoming the disability, rather than acknowledging the individual as a person. Hehir emphasizes the pervasiveness of

ableism within our education systems, eventually offering suggestions to address this issue. Initially, it is suggested that disabled students be explicitly involved in schools' diversity work to address disparities as well as encouraging high standards over high stakes, and shifting to a universal design within systems, structures, and curricula. While this study was primarily focused on K-12 education, the same holds true, even more so, for higher education institutions and students.

Student Perspectives

Alongside the research of higher education there are a number of studies investigating the perspectives of students with disabilities. Hutcheon and Wolbring (2012) established a framework of ableism linked to policy in higher education. They explain that,

ableism can be used as a conceptual tool to understand the social and cultural production of ability and ableness and the ability-preferences underlying disability policy in postsecondary institutions. The concept of ableism allows us to better understand how those with differences are characterized (e.g., as exhibiting or lacking certain abilities) and to explore the types of responses to ability-diversity proposed by policymakers in higher education. (p. 40)

Students and faculty with disabilities experience a range of barriers and oppression in the university environment. As part of this study, Hutcheon and Wolbring (2012) noted the internalization of ableism within participant's responses. Participants in this study mentioned the importance of the "voice of the body", noting the connection between emotions and their physical experiences. This study additionally mentions the idea of, "voice of assertion and voice of silence" in how participants asserted and embraced their varying disabilities. Ultimately, despite their diverse and distinct experiences, these individual's stories are often boiled down to

one aspect of their many faceted identities (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Robinson & Henner, 2018; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012).

Abes and Wallace (2018) were able to interview students with physical disabilities on college campuses. One of the most impactful sections of this work discussed the idea of “experiencing intersectional erasure”. It is described as, “[manifesting] through the invisibility of hypervisibility. As one of few students with physical disabilities on their campuses, many participants, regardless of whether their disabilities were visible or invisible, simultaneously stood out on campus yet were not truly seen” (p. 551). Students consistently described their exhausting experience,

I feel like I’m constantly having to fight on the outside, but inside I’m dying. I feel like if I’m constantly fighting then how can I ever live? If you’re constantly in a state of battle, . . . trying to prove to everybody who you are—it gets tiring. (p. 556)

Abes and Wallace (2018) noted that the students they spoke with were all resisting intersectional erasure in their own way. They describe students as, “searching for home in their bodies and campuses” (p. 557). It is finally emphasized that the onus should not be put on disabled students but instead on higher education institutions and the ableist structures in which they exist, and ultimately how these, and similar systems, should be held accountable for the oppression they cause across campuses.

Research has also been conducted regarding how students navigate systems in pursuit of accommodations. Marshak et al. (2010) identified five categories of barriers that are influential in how motivated students were in pursuing accommodations: "(a) identity issues, (b) desires to avoid negative social reactions, (c) insufficient knowledge, (d) perceived quality and usefulness of services, and (e) negative experiences with faculty" (p. 151). It was found that students often

have a lack of understanding regarding their disability, including their rights and exact accommodation needs. If accommodations are in fact established, students have been found to either not regularly make use of said accommodations or would not seek out additional information regarding the sorts of resources available. There is an incredible amount of pressure on students entering university; the expectation of disability fluency in this regard is misplaced and inconsistent with the role of “student” in higher education. Kruisselbrink Flatt (2013) explains the pressure college students experience in today’s environment with a powerful comparison:

To put the degree to which students feel pressure to succeed into perspective, Howe and Strauss (2000) in their book *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, found that the greatest worry reported by millennial students is college admission and grades, as compared to nuclear war 30 years ago, and the AIDS pandemic and violent crime reported as the greatest worries 20 years ago. (para. 6)

It is then astounding to consider the many barriers, level of oppression, and lack of voice students with disabilities experience compounded with the general anxieties and stress students experience while attending college.

It is evident from the review of literature above that an IE approach to research is seemingly ideal when assessing policy. Without the presence of stakeholder perspective, reviewing a policy is simply perfunctory. In the case of higher education, themes of accountability, affordability alongside issues of access, equity, and power have been specifically noted (Conner & Rabovsky, 2011; Maguire 2009; Parsons, 2005). Similarly, studies have been conducted highlighting the presence of ableism, and more specifically audism, in the higher education environment (Stapleton, 2015; Robinson & Henner, 2018).

This study touches on the above topics while also addressing a gap of research specifically related to the policy and procedural knowledgebase of stakeholders.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Subjectivity Statement

It is important to note I have strong affiliations with St. Catherine University, as it is the focus of this research. I graduated from St. Catherine University's undergraduate programming with a bachelor's degree in Interpreting in 2015 and started their Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program in the summer of 2019. Additionally, I've worked as the Program Coordinator/Interpreter in the ASL & Interpreting Department since August 2017. I have, therefore, had firsthand experience working in and amongst the St. Kate's community as a staff person, as well as acting in the role of an interpreter. It is from this strong affiliation with this university and from these varying experiences my passion for this topic began. I am extraordinarily aware of the potential bias I have surrounding this topic and it is this consciousness that will continually shape and guide my research.

Participants

The aim of this research is to analyze the interpreting policies at St. Catherine University and the surrounding perspectives of stakeholders. As interpreting itself involves a number of different individuals, the participants of this study are quite variable. Ideally, the participants of this study would have included at least one faculty person, staff member, administrator, student, and contract interpreter, hearing and deaf, from St. Catherine University. Multiple perspectives from each of these categories were additionally welcome, with the goal of having at least 10 participants, with each category having an equal number of participants as not to have one perspective dominant over another. The only requirement of participants was that they have had experience with the interpreting services at St. Catherine University (including individuals who

have received services, provided services, managed services and/or were involved in the creation of interpreting policies) within the last 5 years.

Methods

This study used an institutional ethnographic (IE) research approach. Originally developed by Dorothy Smith in 1987, the institutional ethnography approach aims to, “understand how what actual people do and experience is organized in relation to others. Epistemologically, IE is distinguished from other sociological approaches by its commitment to beginning inquiry with what people know and have experienced” (Waters, 2018, para. 1). Essentially, an institutional ethnography initially focuses on the authentic experiences of individuals from a specific community. In an interview from 2004, Smith explains that,

There is a very different possibility of trying to develop a sociology that looks at society from the point of the people and their experience of it. Institutional ethnography picks up this idea, to explore the institutional order and the ruling relations from the point of view of people who are in various ways implicated in and participating in it. (Widerberg, p. 183)

This approach to research leads us to believe that an analysis of policy alone will be inherently superficial without including the perspectives of stakeholders; in other words, the individuals who created it, work under it, interact with it, and in the case of interpreting policy, receive services produced from it. An IE approach allows research to not only gather narratives regarding a specific type of policy, but starting from the perspectives of stakeholders, will better ensure authenticity while also mitigating possible biases.

That being said, Smith has acknowledged the impact text has on the relationships between people and systems. As Rankin (2017) describes,

texts are important to IE's social ontology. People's use of texts gives ruling relations a material form that institutional ethnographers can use to investigate social organization. Ethnographic data offer instances of informants' active and competent involvement with institutional texts and offer researchers insights into the everyday work of ruling (p. 2).

This specifically exemplifies how well suited an IE approach is to reviewing policy in higher education.

Another point of emphasis is how we define the term "policy". One particularly poignant definition states that, "'policy' itself should be treated not merely as an officially accepted government directive, but as the resultant of the interplay between the key actors involved on issues relating to the structure, function and character of higher education systems" (as cited by Axelrod, Desai-trilokekar, Shanahan, & Wellen, 2011, p. 146). While this could be seen as an idealistic view of policy, it is not without merit. This study aims to address this exact definition and in a sense, its validity. Considering this concept of policy, a stakeholder-centered approach to research such as IE is especially apt for investigating policy.

One important aspect of IE is the ability of the researcher to take on varying standpoints of the stakeholders to understand the power dynamics of a given community. Rankin (2017) states that,

without adopting a standpoint, a particular location within institutional practices, the researcher may be swayed by the apparent rationalities of dominant forms of knowledge...Thus, 'captured' the researcher is unlikely to discover how different practices of knowledge work and how they are generated and activated in contradictory ways. (p. 2)

This is particularly important in the case of this research and had the potential to pose a challenge given the researcher's history with St. Kate's. One specific challenge is the potential of

relating with certain experiences more than others. Every effort will be made to be particularly stringent in regard to the interpretation of all narratives shared.

In addition to the challenges mentioned above, Rankin (2017) cautions new IE researchers with a number of various mistakes. The most common is for researchers to become sidetracked in their work, whether it be by a non-complementary theoretical framework or their own experience navigating the research.

Theoretical Framework

The mission of St. Catherine University is, “to educate women to lead and influence” (St. Catherine University, 2020a) and has a long and significant history of feminism (St. Catherine University, 2020b). Coincidentally, the IE approach Dorothy Smith developed is grounded in feminism as well. Her work originated after discovering how her experience as a woman was highly influenced by the systems and narratives surrounding her. What’s interesting in this regard is that IE has since developed what is known as standpoint theory. This foundation of IE further likens itself to a study of policy relating to minority communities; as Collins (2020) describes, “standpoint theory is especially important in study experiences of minorities since their own awareness and reality can be hidden from the eye (i.e., from the social situation) of a nonminority privileged viewpoint, leading to distorted or incomplete knowledge.” (pp. 16-17). With this in mind, a feminist theoretical framework has been applied to this research study. Stringer (2014) explains feminist theory, stating that, “standpoint epistemologies emerge from feminist theory contending that studies involving women should privilege women’s lived experience and the standpoints, or perspectives, that experience bring to the ethnography project” (p. 56). Given the roots of IE and the make-up of St. Catherine University, a feminist approach

will provide a framework for understanding the environment in which these narratives take place.

Procedure

Upon approval of this research, the Director of the O'Neill Center for Academic Development was contacted informing them of this study (see Appendix A). Given the focus, content, and goal of this study, it was important the University be familiar with the research and provide feedback to this process. A request for distribution email was sent to Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, the Alum Department, and the ASL Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator to reach St. Kate's faculty/staff, students, alum, and contract interpreters, respectively. Included in this email was an explanation of the study alongside a recruitment email for participants (see Appendix A). After some initial correspondence and guidance, the request for distribution was successfully sent out to faculty, staff, and students. After speaking with the Alumni Office, they were unable to email recruitment request and instead recommended posting information on either Facebook or the St. Kate's Alumni LinkedIn page. After consideration, this recommendation was accepted, and an amendment was submitted and approved to address this gap in recruitment (see Appendix E).

Given the speed with which COVID-19 has changed how we interact on a daily basis, there was a level of unpredictability of what to expect during this study. The recommendations during the time were to maintain distance from others and wear masks when out in public (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, July 31; World Health Organization, 2020, June 4), so all interviews were conducted virtually through the online software Zoom. These were all 1:1 interviews, lasting for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Fortunately, Zoom allows for recording, so all interviews were recorded real-time. Interviews with deaf individuals were conducted in ASL and interviews with hearing participants were conducted in English.

Each interview was then transcribed verbatim for analysis and shared with the interviewee to review for any inaccuracies.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured, the initial questions acting as general “grand tour questions” as described by Stringer (2014), allowing space for the participant to speak freely without specific guidance. The hope being that this casual start to the interview will allow all participants to feel comfortable and confident to speak their mind. Questions will then become more specific, focusing on the interpreting services at St. Kate’s, their experiences with it, and eventually their familiarity with the interpreting policy. The interview will end asking each participant if they have any recommendations of others who should be involved in the study (see Appendix D).

Data Analysis

Once completed, all interviews were transcribed for analysis. Each category of stakeholder was assessed separately to differentiate and honor all perspectives and their possible variants (Stringer, 2014). Interviews and survey answers were then reviewed for pertinent information and blocked out by commonalities within narratives. Once this was complete, interviews were reviewed for overarching themes and organized into categories. These then provided a schema for stakeholder perspectives, highlighting where opinions align and oppose. In IE terms, it is the point in which the problematic is realized, as, “it often rests on stories (accounts) that reveal troubles arising in (or conflicts between) authorized and experiential knowledge; whereby the tensions that standpoint informants know about and experience are either invisible or misrepresented within the authorized accounts” (Rankin, 2017, p. 3). Beyond this analysis, themes found in the interviews were used as a tool for review of the current interpreting policy. Similar to the assessment of interviews, the policy was blocked out into

sections of theme. This was then compared with each overarching interview theme to look for alignment and points of contention.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. The interpreting policy will initially be discussed to establish a framework of the policy and procedures discussed in the following analysis. Five themes were found through the analysis of stakeholder narratives. Specifically, familiarity with interpreting policy, discrepancies of experience v. procedure, positive perspectives of change, communication concerns, and disempowerment are discussed.

Interpreting and Access Policies

When looking for the interpreting policies at St. Catherine University, there is information available on the University website. To mirror what is available to the public, when simply Googling, “St. Catherine University Interpreting Services Policy”, the first results are the ASL/Interpreting Department at St. Kate’s, as well as a link to the CATIE Center, a grant funded program based out of St. Kate’s. Upon further investigation, there is a “Policies” section at the bottom of the home St. Catherine University website (St. Catherine University, 2021). This webpage lists a Privacy Policy, Non-Discrimination Statement, Title IX, State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and finally, Student Policies. Disability Resources are listed under Academic Policies with Student Policies for both graduate and undergraduate students. This leads to the Disability Resources webpage, which can also be found by navigating from the St. Kate’s home page, to Life at St. Kate’s, Student Assistance, and finally, O’Neill Center for Academic Development. This webpage provides information regarding accommodations, stating,

St. Kate's values diversity of all kinds, and considers disability another aspect of diversity. It's our goal to address barriers to full participation in the academic and co-curricular experience—online and on campus. Students meet with our staff to plan appropriate accommodations and identify campus and community resources that may be beneficial. The process is flexible and guided by each student's history, experiences and disability documentation. If you are a prospective student, contact Disability Resources staff early in your college planning. Disability Resources staff have experience working with students impacted by many conditions, such as learning disabilities, chronic medical issues, ADD/ADHD, traumatic brain injury, psychiatric conditions, Autism spectrum disorders, hearing loss/Deafness and vision-based disabilities, etc. (Disability Resources, 2021)

Beyond this information, there is a Resources and Support for Students with Disabilities section, that lists “Sign language interpreters” with a link to request an interpreter.

When requesting the policy from the disability office for this study, written explanations of procedures were provided, along with an Interpreter Handbook dated 2017. This handbook is specifically written for interpreters working with deaf students, and includes 20 sections of procedural information, touching on expectations surrounding scheduling, timing, making a request, student absences/cancellations, interpreter substitutions, invoices, ethics and confidentiality, attendance and punctuality, appearance, team interpreting, mobile devices, complaints, as well as safety and campus closures (St. Catherine University Disability Resources, 2017). Additional information regarding the interpreting request process was gathered from the Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator, this included a document that listed a 12-step process of how requests are received, processed, and confirmed. Important to note, for

unknown reasons, is that an official policy was not obtained through this communication. The analysis done as a part of this research was focused solely on the information found publicly available on the St. Kate's website, as well as the information recently mentioned collected through communication with the O'Neill Center staff.

Upon further investigation, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access Plan dated June 2011 is available on the University website (St. Catherine University). This document outlines the University's compliance with the ADA alongside the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA), "a state law [that] prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business based on protected class, such as: race, religion, disability, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity" (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 2021). This document specifically addresses the topics of accessibility, employment, and education. The accessibility section mentions an audit in the Fall 2010 that addressed the physical accessibility of campus. The employment and education sections both mention non-discriminatory policies, mentioning disability, MHRA defining disability as,

Any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who (1) has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. (Minnesota Legislature, 2020)

This information is provided alongside a statement regarding the provision of accommodations that align with the standards of the ADA and MHRA.

Survey: Participants

This study garnered a total of 18 participants, with 11 survey respondents. The survey participants ranged in role, with four full-time faculty, one adjunct faculty, three staff members, and three participants having multiple roles. These multiple roles consisted of an individual who was, a) staff, alum, and current graduate student, b) a former adjunct faculty and current contractor as well as, c) an alum, current student, and current contractor with the University. There was only one deaf survey participant, while the rest of participants were hearing.

Regarding the participants general knowledge of the interpreting services at St. Kate's, two of the 11 participants (18%) did not know how to request an interpreter. The remaining nine participants mentioned at least a minimal knowledge of how to request an interpreter, with six speaking more specifically to procedural aspects of interpreting services. This included a knowledge of when to request interpreters, who to be in contact with regarding interpreting requests, as well as a mention of prep material for interpreters. When asked about their first impressions of interpreting services, the majority of participants (72%) were specifically positive in their response, mentioning the professionalism of interpreters. Two participants, both contractors with the University, were less positive. One mentioned uncertainty regarding the job assignment procedure, while the other mentioned disorganization and excessive email communication.

Additionally common was the participants' response to question number four, asking, "If services have changed in their time at St. Kate's? How? Do you know why?" One individual did not respond to this question for unknown reasons, possibly due to their lack of knowledge, leaving a total response rate of n=10 or 90%. Of the remaining 10 respondents, 72% were unsure of how and/or if services have changed during their time at St. Kate's. Of note, 30% of

respondents mentioned a knowledge that changes had occurred with services, but a feeling of uncertainty regarding the specifics of said changes (i.e. names, procedures).

Regarding how services and/or their experiences have changed since COVID-19, two participants did not answer, for unknown reasons, leaving a total response rate of n=9 or 82%. Of the remaining 9 respondents, five mentioned a shift to the use of Zoom as a virtual option for events. Within this context there were a variety of responses, with participants mentioning the shift to virtual meetings in a positive or neutral light, while others mentioned technological challenges alongside concerns regarding the knowledge base and continued education of requesters.

One of the most significantly common responses by participants was their lack familiarity with how the interpreting policies were created. Two participants did not respond to this question, while for unknown reasons, it could be due to their lack of knowledge that an answer was not provided. This left a total of n=9 or 82% of respondents. All of the participants that did respond, responded in the negative, stating they were not familiar with the creation of the interpreting policy at St. Kate's. One less participant responded to the follow up question of how and when they learned about the interpreting policies (n=8, 72%). Of these respondents, six restated their unfamiliarity with interpreting policies. The remaining respondents mentioned while they were not familiar with the policies, they imagine said policies could be found on the University website. One participant specifically mentioned being informed of one expectation for interpreting services, specifically that regardless of a deaf audience, they should stay and interpret.

The challenges with interpreting services mentioned by participants are quite varied. Two participants did not answer this question for reasons unknown, leaving a total of n=9 or 83%

response rate. Six of respondents (66%) stated that they had not experienced challenges with interpreting services. These participants were made up of faculty, staff, and one participant that is a staff member, alumna, and current grad student. Two participants spoke specifically to concerns with interpreting services, both of whom are current contractors with the University. One of these participants mentioned payment complications that came with being both a staff member and working as a contract interpreter. The other participant spoke in length about a number of frustrations they have in regard to interpreting services procedures. Of note was their concerns regarding communication, speaking to gaps in how information/prep material is garnered from requesters on behalf of interpreters, alongside dissatisfaction with the quality of organization in conjunction with excessive email communication. It was further noted that they never received feedback on their work and were unsure of if an evaluation was in place for contract interpreters. They also mentioned concerns with the billing system, specifically ongoing changes to the payment system without a consistent contact person leading to lost and late payments, ultimately incurring late fees.

When asked about any positive experiences they've had with interpreting services, all but one participant responded (n=11 or 92%). The responses were somewhat varied, with multiple individuals mentioning "communication" as positive. Unknown, is if this is referring to the communication they may have had with disability services staff while requesting services, while working with interpreters during events, or some other combination of communication. Participants additionally mentioned the skill set of the interpreters, noting the benefits of interpreters familiar with the specifics of their work. Another commonality was the mention of support. One participant, an alum, current student and contracted interpreter, mentioned the support they have received from the O'Neill Center, providing needed resources, answering

questions, and the availability of a space to debrief after assignments. The deaf survey respondent mentioned appreciating the support interpreters provide by respecting and being comfortable with their varying personal preferences of communication.

Interview: Participants

The interview participants did not have as much diversity as the survey respondents. There were a total of seven interviews, participants consisting of one deaf faculty member, one hearing faculty member, one deaf undergraduate student, and four interviews with individuals who held multiple roles. These multiple roles consisted of two participants who were alum/current contractors, a former staff member/former contract interpreter/alum, and an individual who is a current contractor/alum/agency owner. Specific demographics were not requested, other than asking each participant to describe their relationship with St. Catherine University. Interviewees and survey respondents were asked the same set of questions (see Appendix D).

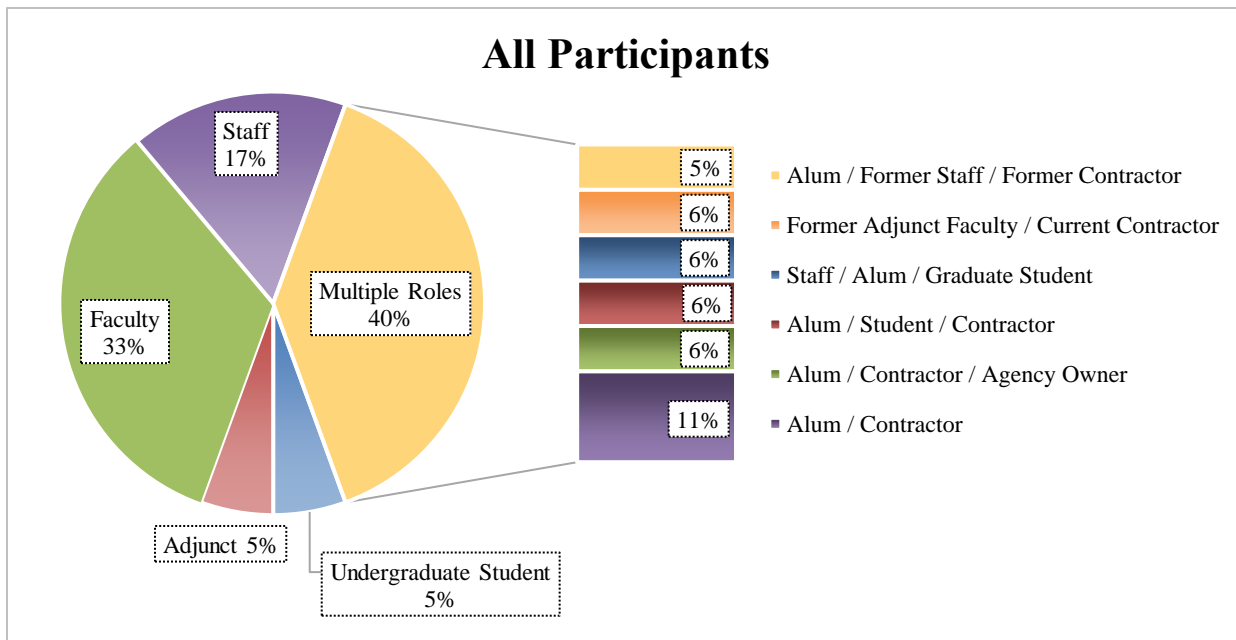


Figure 1. All participants' roles in relation to St. Catherine University

Themes

Familiarity with Interpreting Policy

There have been multiple studies that have noted the lack of knowledge of disabled students in regard to their own rights, disability, and accommodations, alongside work focusing on faculty knowledge of student accommodations and their willingness to provide them (as cited by Marshak et al., 2010). It has similarly been found that faculty often lack a voice in higher education policy creation procedures, alongside strong recommendations of student perspective involvement (Maguire, 2009). What seems to be lacking in this realm is research focusing specifically on stakeholder knowledge of the policies and procedures behind these accommodations. Interestingly, one of the most prominent themes in both survey responses and interviews was the fact that none of the participants had specific familiarity or knowledge of official language for the interpreting policy. An interview participant explained their initial experience as a full-time deaf faculty member before the establishment of the Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator position at St. Kate's,

Interpreting services themselves, when I first arrived, were quite murky. I was uncertain of who I should be in contact with, if it was the University, our department...We had no system with an interpreter coordinator for the entire University, so I originally got used to not having a system, and it was quite unclear how to request interpreters and who I should be in contact with. So, that was my first experience at St. Kate's. There was no central point of contact for interpreting services and requesting interpreters.

They went on to mention their knowledge of how the interpreting policy was eventually established, speaking to the experience of the hiring the new Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator position,

I don't know anything [about the policy] and that is part of the problem. The policy itself has never been run by us. As a deaf faculty member, the only time I was asked about this was in terms of the hiring procedure, not so much the policy.

This point specifically parallels Bauman's (2004) discussion of the power dynamics within educational systems and how often deaf perspectives are overlooked. Similarly, contract interpreters, while having a general procedural understanding of services, also voiced a lack of knowledge regarding what the official interpreting policies were at St. Kate's. Multiple contract interpreters/alum mentioned recollection an interpreter handbook, one specifically stated,

A while back, and this is maybe a couple years now, I remember seeing a handbook...But to my recollection it's not been formally shared with the interpreting team, so I don't know much about the interpreting policy. It's just like, I show up to St. Kate's and use my best judgment. But I couldn't say I really know anything formally about the policy or why it's in place.

After mentioning a similar unfamiliarity with the specifics of the policy, another contract interpreter/alum mentioned how and when they learned what they know about the interpreting policies,

[It was] trial and error. I think it started like six years ago, really...Previous to how interpreting services are provided now, that there was no policy, other than you found the people for access. And there is no designated person to give that, so the policy was, "we provide interpreters". But the nitty gritty of how to get that interpreter really just wasn't effective, and so like yes, the overarching general policy is like, "we are accessible, we will provide access".

A unique perspective of note of was a contract interpreter who was also an alum and interpreting agency owner. They spoke to the concern of St. Kate's attempting to function as an agency, stating,

St. Kate's seems to be trying to act like an agency, I don't think that...their policy, their standard operating procedures, are supportive of that mentality, of the student and the client, what's best for them comes first to the interpreters, that is not communicated to the interpreters as a policy, and I think that that's unfortunate because the people who are trying so hard to do what's right for the client is playing the middleman of managing up to the student and managing down to the interpreter and you're just you're stuck in the middle, and I think that that just creates complete ugliness and stress...I've never received anything like that, as an entrepreneur, I've never received, to my memory, anything saying, "this is how we choose, this is what our standards are, these are what our priorities are". They've been spoken to me, but there's nothing that's like, "this is who we are, as a community, and this is our stand, so, you either have to support this stance that we take or choose to interpret somewhere else", and I think that that's just good leadership — to have standards that are in place and written and understood by everybody, and that does, not to me as an interpreter when I was there, that did not exist at all, it was just, so I don't know if the leadership doesn't understand the interpreting process and what's needed, and that would be my first guess.

Furthermore, the deaf student mentioned uncertainty with decision making surrounding interpreter hiring. They specifically mentioned a shift in which interpreting agency is primarily used by the University, stating,

Which, I think [this change] is okay, but part of it comes from me. I kind of like seeing [past interpreters'] faces sometimes. But it's kind of nice to have interpreters who I know, what their style is, they know me, which is nice. But it's just kind of like, I think not as flexible as it was before, but it's good enough.

There is certainly something to be said regarding the level of familiarity one has of a policy in relation to what the daily work of a position entails. The degree to which participants shared concern of their lack of knowledge, ranged in terms of their role. Individuals who worked in and around interpreting services on a near daily basis spoke more to their lack of knowledge and its implications, while participants with less experience acknowledged their lack of knowledge without additional comment.

Discrepancy of Experience v. Procedure

A commonality found in both survey respondents and interviews was the opposing narratives of experience vs. procedure of interpreting services. All contract interpreters mentioned explicitly positive experiences while working with St. Kate's faculty and staff. One participant, an alum/contract interpreter/agency owner, spoke to their positive experience, stating,

The instructors know what's up, they know how to use an interpreter, it seems, at least the ones that I've worked with, they were excited about it and we were able to, at least in one class, really meld into the classroom so that it was almost like we were a part of the environment and not a sore thumb sticking out, which to me, I think, is ideal usually...that was a really great experience to be able to be included in like feeling a part of the environment. Instead of feeling like a sore thumb, I think that's important for interpreters to be able to facilitate that. So, the open mindedness at St. Kate's was really, really great.

Vice versa, all staff and faculty interview participants mentioned specifically positive experiences while working with contract interpreters during events and classes. When speaking to their initial experience with interpreting services, the hearing faculty stated, “They are so professional. Like sometimes they're hardly older than the students. And yet they completely maintain their professionalism in the space.”

Curiously, the majority of interviewees, regardless of role, spoke negatively when asked about their experience with the policy and procedural side of interpreting services. As one contract interpreter/alum/agency owner stated,

I love St. Kate's, I absolutely love my experience here as a student. I love the instructors; I'd love interpreting for the instructors there. I've never had a bad experience, they're all incredible, and so this aspect is, like, one piece of the puzzle that kind of sucks...I really don't know what any of the standards are.

This participant also mentioned their concerns surrounding the technology side of policies in their work with St. Kate's,

They're in the stone age's — honestly um —because most places that have a high amount of requests, like St. Kate's, they generally are putting their own jobs into the system and they have the ability to see that the job has been entered, see when it's been entered, see has an interpreter picked up that job or if it's still open. And instead, there's a ton of communication, that I think is very time intensive both for St Kate's and the agency, trying to manage it in a way, that is, it's archaic, honestly. And it's unfortunate because time could be spent so much better by St Kate's. The resource of time, I think, is not managed well. I think, unfortunately, for the players in the interpreting side of things, because, like I said in the beginning, it's really well known how hard that people try at St.

Kate's, to do everything that is best for the students and also best for the interpreter but, that's all I can think of for now.

One alum/past contract interpreter/past staff member added their perspective on the dichotomy of their experiences,

For some reason St. Kate's attracts the type of people who say yes to things and don't say, don't know how to set healthy boundaries, but you have a really good group of talented awesome people, who want to do the work and want to make the work better, and St. Kate's kind of sees that in people and leeches it out of them until they have nothing left. Which is a very harsh way to put that, but that's what it feels like! So, I think those were the challenges and that's the heartbreaking part is it's all of the politics and all of the drama and all of the, "who does what" it's not about the work it's about all of the stuff around the work that makes you start to not want to do the work. And those I would say are the biggest challenges...I think that positive experiences are the work. It's an amazing place to learn and grow. It's an amazing place to interpret with some really cool faculty and staff.

Additionally telling was the question of their first impression of interpreting services. All but one interviewee mentioned a negative initial experience. Of note in this regard was that these negative narratives related almost entirely to policy and procedural gaps of interpreting services. One alum/current contract interpreter mentioned feeling dumbfounded by the 30+ year presence of an ASL and Interpreting department in conjunction with ongoing issues of access. One participant used the word, "chaos" while describing their experience, while another mentioned the concept of, "rose colored glasses", in that they were a young and inexperienced interpreter/alum, facing frustrations with scheduling and acquiring prep materials. The deaf

interviewees also mentioned some negative experiences in this regard. The deaf faculty member mentioned the lack of system and understanding of services when they started in their role, while also stating the positive impacts the interpreter coordinator has had on their experience,

Since we established that interpreter coordinator, we've had more direct questions, asking us of our preferred interpreters, who we are willing to work with, to make sure we have the right match. The system itself has changed and I am thrilled to see that we have more efficiency in collecting data about interpreting in general at St. Kate's.

The deaf student mentioned positive experiences working with interpreters during their first year as a PSEO² student with St. Kate's, while later mentioning a misunderstanding after staff turnover that led to them showing up to a course without interpreters scheduled,

The second semester there was a new disability service provider and she thought that I was a full-time student, but I wasn't. And because I needed to sign up for classes a week before class, I sent her the accommodations I needed for the class. And I showed up for class and there were no interpreters. So that was kind of a drag. I sent her an email and she said to call the ASL department, and she wasn't aware I was using them. But from then on, there were interpreters for the rest of the classes, which was great.

Interestingly, the one interviewee that was entirely positive in regard to their experience with interpreting services was a hearing faculty member. This individual, having worked at St. Kate's for 26 years, had never experienced the interpreting procedures by way of requesting interpreters or working within the system itself. They explained during their interview,

I have never requested the services. It's come by way of the student and I think through the O'Neill Center. But I get the sort of "FYI" that there's a student in your class who

² Post-Secondary Enrollment Options; referring to students attending university/college as high school students.

requires interpreting, and everything just seems to magically be arranged, at absolutely no inconvenience to me at all. And it turns out to be something that is so helpful for the student they're working with but also for the class in general, that I'm always happy to hear that the ASL interpreters are involved.

With these narratives in mind, there seems to be a correlation of positive experiences with services themselves, alongside negative experiences with the policy and procedural aspect of interpreting services. Understandably, most of the literature relating to the experience of marginalized stakeholders speak explicitly negative and discriminatory experiences within the higher education environment (Marshak et al., 2010; Robinson & Henner, 2018). Especially apt in this regard is the work of Parsons (2005), in which they name the contradictory nature of policy and philosophy in higher education, specifically mentioning an assumption-based creation of policy, alongside ill-defined values and beliefs. This critique falls in line with the conflicting experiences of participants, in which policies are ostensibly not representative of St. Kate's professed mission and values.

Positive Perspectives of Change

Throughout the interviews there were multiple mentions of policy change and decision making within the University system. The majority of participants spoke to positive change in the St. Kate's interpreting system and structure since their initial experiences. One contract interpreter/alum mentioned an increase in awareness, stating,

Back in 2014, you had to kind of do a lot more advocacy and education, whereas now the people who are requesting, mostly for just big university events, the professors, once you work with them ongoing, are more familiar. But for larger university events, they know who to contact, they know, usually, they know how to set up the technology to make sure

that we are accessible. They know who to send the prep materials to and are willing to do that and are very open to any feedback on. And some of it is my personal growth and some of it is the university's growth, where I used to feel reticent to ask for what we needed and I did, because I was, you know, I need to do my job. But now I don't feel as reticent, because they will ask like, "hey, do you have everything you need?" So, I would say that's been a really big positive change is that there's just more awareness.

Similarly, another contract interpreter/alum mentioned the shift in services since the onset of COVID-19, stating,

As we've moved on in COVID, things have become easier actually...And they always provide information, they provide timely confirmations that I've been taking a lot more work with St. Kate's actually in the last like six months or so. So, that's been great, but for a while it was kind of rocky, like, no one really knew how to do Zoom, but that was applicable to everyone in COVID. Like, I, for a while it was kind of funny because I was like a tech coach and an interpreter, but that again can be said for all of my work, because I was on Zoom all the time, so who better to help.

Interestingly, the hearing faculty member, while not familiar with the policy, also noted a positive shift in how services were provided,

Right, yeah, it seems like, it's less — I don't want to say, "on the fly", but early on that's what it felt like. Like, we need to find an interpreter for this student, let's grab someone, and now they are so clearly trained, so clearly professional.

The deaf faculty member also mentioned a specific improvement in the quality of interpreters working on campus since the implementation of the Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator position,

The quality of interpreters who we're bringing in has also improved, to what I had previously experienced. Rather than relying on hoping the system will work, we're relying more on strong skill sets and who specifically matches that individual to make sure it's effective communication. That is certainly positive...There's more communication, making sure you have the right fit, having the appropriate interpreter for a specific meeting. That is a huge improvement. Rather than having the "warm body syndrome", that often happens. That has lessened and the system is now more focused on the quality of interpreting services.

Another commonality in discussions of change was the mention of the people whose work made said change possible. An alum/past contract interpreter/past staff member spoke to the individuals involved in the establishment of the Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator position,

I think that the policy, looking at policy broadly, in the sense that how did we get to the point where we created an interpreter coordinator position on campus, was a lot of fighting by a few people, a few people who were very dedicated to doing that work for navigating those relationships, and for negotiating and advocating for those relationships...It was a lot of relationship building, discussions, meetings, concessions. It was not a very straightforward process, it was a lot of work to get to the point where people were finally like, "Oh yeah, okay, let's do this".

Similarly, one contract interpreter/alum mentioned how hard the fight for change had been on these individuals,

Compared to like, it's so hard to like, talk about challenges, right now, because seeing seven years ago versus now, I'm just really grateful that we've improved, so much so, I try not to nitpick. So, I'm just like, we're so much better, and it makes me really sad for

the people that I know we've lost because of the access being so hard fought for. And it being like a really long journey to get to where we are, and I know that there've been people lost in that process, because they just couldn't fight for it anymore.

When asked about the “why” of changes happening, the deaf faculty member spoke in a similar vein, mentioning the work of many individuals over the years,

I can't remember a specific event as the catalyst, but I know that we had had issues with getting interpreters for faculty senate meetings. We had issues bringing interpreters for specific classes. Figuring that out, there were several systemic issues with simply bringing in interpreters, and the older faculty at the time were frustrated. Plus, there were hearing faculty involved within the interpreting department that did push the administration, stating that we have to have something on campus that can facilitate our interpreting services...They were very frustrated, and it was time. The deaf faculty, we spoke to that need for access, so there are a number of catalysts that led to the hiring of that interpreter.

The perspectives shared on change are generally positive, while simultaneously acknowledging past struggles towards access. The specifics of change were not entirely known, but multiple participants spoke to what could be called a “tipping point” at which change was simply necessary. What is clear is that while positive change did occur, it took an incredible amount of time and effort, and often led to the burnout of stakeholders.

Communication Concerns

In addition to the perspectives of change in policy and procedure, interview narratives were found to share concerns with communication, contradicting many survey participants' positive responses. The deaf faculty member in particular spoke to a specific point of concern

with the lack of communication alongside important decisions made regarding the newly established Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator position,

The issue with that, was that there was a policy of where to place this position, and we made a number of recommendations, but they made a last-minute change without our input. So really, that interpreter coordinator was originally going to be housed under the campus events department, which is much more central to the University, but they instead housed them under Disability Services. We had thought this position was going to have certain supervisors, have a certain structure, and we had given them specific recommendations of where we thought this person should be placed, but they made that decision regardless of our input. It seems that while we give input on policy, this decision was made without this considered, so they're not necessarily listening to the disabled community in terms of what things should and can look like. And they seem to hear us when we give this input, but then we don't see it happening in real life, where are our recommendations in this process? How did you come to this final decision? So, the policy itself and why that decision changed, I don't know, they never asked us. We gave them our recommendations, but they made their final decision on their own. There was no follow-up discussion, no follow up questions, just a change in decision.

In a similar vein, a contract interpreter/alum mentioned an experience of policy/procedural change without communication,

For a while, there was an idea to provide interpreters for every single event on campus regardless of if there were a request. Which is cool, and I love the accessibility part of that, but it was also burning out some of the interpreters, we don't have a huge team, and so going and air guitaring tor every single event was like, this is, there are better uses of

my services, because there are people out there who need interpreting right now and aren't getting it. And, and that stopped for whatever reason. It was never like an announcement, like, "we're not doing that anymore", it just, there just stopped being requests for it.

One unique point of emphasis during deaf faculty member's interview was what they referred to as the "trail of the policy" with regard to education and understanding across campus. When asked how they learned of the interpreting policies, they replied that, "Most of the time, [they] learned about the policy when something happened. [They'd] notice a gap in services, search for said policy and couldn't find anything". Early on in their interview, they spoke to the physical location of services on campus, referring to the offices as hidden away alongside the request form on the St. Kate's website. One of their main grievances regarding interpreting policy in this regard was how policy and procedure is communicated to the St. Kate's community, stating,

We'll receive information from the coordinator, but that isn't specifically the Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator's responsibility. It's the administration's responsibility to educate the community on our policies, but it hasn't been coming from administration. It's instead coming from those who are specifically not responsible for that work. There is a disconnect from what I've learned, the first policy I had when I started, to what was happening. So, two separate things: when I first came to campus, I looked for the policy for interpreters and it seemed no one knew exactly where it was housed. I finally took it on myself to do some more in depth searching and was eventually able to better understand the process, but again it wasn't clear of who exactly would be responsible — if it was our department paying for services, the disability office paying — it seemed no one really knew exactly how it worked. We've now brought in the interpreter coordinator

and I know where to find the policy. But again, it should not be their responsibility to inform me of that policy. The policy should ultimately come from the administration. They have a stronger voice rather than this coordinator position. If the administration was to inform the community, they would be more likely to follow said policy. We're instead putting it on this one person to educate an entire community and they won't necessarily be listened to as readily. The administrators are the decision makers. People are learning from the wrong place. It should come from the powers that be, so to speak. So, it's really more about teaching our community and it's coming from the wrong place. That responsibility seems to have been thrown onto this coordinator, when it's really the administration who are the policy makers. They are the ones that the community will follow and listen to.

The research in higher education relating to communication speaks in a similar light. Abes and Wallace (2018) spoke of the responsibility often put on disabled students in this regard. They instead emphasized that higher education institutions should be held accountable for their systems and the ableist structures in which they exist. Similarly, Parsons (2005) spoke to the complexities of communication communities and policy creation in higher education,

Communication communities exist to solve problems. Problem-solving in the higher education policy arena did not match the Habermasian ideal of communicative competence nor is it an irrational activity that produces problem solutions through some random or accidental confluence of events that results in a policy decision. Instead, problem-solving depended on and was framed by an axiomatic system of beliefs, institutional relationships, personal relationships, and values that guide the community in the construction and design of student aid programs. Successful problem solvers were

those who built their solutions on these foundations and showed how the community's past and future were linked to acceptance of those solutions. (p. 136)

Disempowerment

While this study did not garner many deaf participants, their shared narratives were especially rich in establishing a framework of their unique experiences. One clear foundation of these experiences was the disempowerment present in both the deaf faculty and student's narratives. The deaf faculty member spoke to many frustrations within their role, one point being the impact services have had on themselves and their fellow deaf faculty.

A problem I'll also mention is that we put the interpreter position under student services. That meant that their focus shifted to students. Staff did not have a central person because that coordinator slowly but surely ended up focusing more so on student needs. We have three deaf faculty, and as faculty we want to teach courses outside of our specialization. We want to teach GSJ³, we want to teach TRW⁴, but often shy away from those opportunities because we don't have that primary interpreter available to us. So, we have seen improvement, certainly, in many regards, but the continuity for deaf faculty and staff doesn't seem to be there. I have seen changes, but we have a long way to go. Also, like I had mentioned, we still need two or three full-time interpreters on campus. Thinking about how much we pay for independent contractors and where those funds could be reallocated.

This narrative is nearly identical to a study conducted by Stapleton (2015), in which deaf faculty mentioned similar barriers and frustrations within academia. Similarly apt in demonstrating the unique experiences of deaf faculty were two narratives that were inexplicably close in wording

³ Global Search for Justice (GSJ) is a senior-level capstone course at St. Kate's that any faculty is eligible to teach.

⁴ The Reflective Woman (TRW) is an introductory course at St. Kate's that any faculty is eligible to teach.

while speaking to entirely different experiences. The first narrative shown will be that of an alum/contract interpreter, speaking to their improved experience over the years,

Even just like having consumers like, say like, “these are people I can't work with” and, that being honored, I know that's not even like a blink of an eye anymore at St. Kate's but before it was like, “why?”. Like, you know, it was emotional labor on the part of the consumer and from the interpreter, to have like, “why?”, you know, “why is that person not qualified for this work?”, instead of just like, I mean there's probably still discussion of that going on, just like, you know, are they just not good for this job or whatever, but before it was like a fight for every little moment of access given. Every, like, every cent was fought over. And as a contractor it's nice not to like, I couldn't shoot an email for, if a job goes over, me like, “hey, just let you know, I went over 15 minutes. I'll be billing you the extra 15”. And that's it, whereas like previously, it would be a fight for every little thing and then hoping that they don't lose my invoice or hoping that they don't lose the request for an interpreter to like, “who is following up on that?”. Like there's just a clear pathway, and in some ways, it could be a lot more clear, of course, as everything could always be.

Of note is this narrative's use of the term, “why”, in their experience in comparison to that of the deaf faculty interview. When asked if they had faced any challenges with interpreting services, the deaf faculty member responded,

There seems to be resistance, in general. Sometimes you will make a request and there might be a, “why?” in response. “Why do you need two interpreters?”, “Why do you need these things”, and we did previously request a certified deaf interpreter and the first response was “why?”. I personally think we need a policy that eliminates the response of

“why”. Even though we have an interpreter coordinator on campus, which is very positive, they are entirely overwhelmed. So even though we have this person, there's still doubt seemingly about if we need interpreters for a meeting. With COVID as well, people have asked, “why can't we just turn on the automatic captions?” Sometimes, it's not about the policy itself, but again it's about the language and knowledge and the individuals, their willingness to learn and listen. Thinking about the intersectionality of language and the need for access. It's not always relating to policy, but policy is a starting point. If there is a policy established by administration and the community follows those guidelines, they can become more aware. We do have some resistance once in a while, that question of “why “comes up quite often. I have to then justify and explain the reasons behind my request. And that's kind of oppressive, I'll say, and quite dismissive.

When speaking to the deaf student about their perspective of interpreting services, it is initially important to note the dismissive nature of the language used when they spoke of negative experiences. Phrases such as, “which was kind of a bummer”, “that was kind of a drag” and, “it's good enough”, came up when speaking about their experiences with services in both on campus and abroad course experiences. This student additionally mentioned concerns of technology and interpreting services during the online shift of coursework since COVID-19,

I use the GoogleMeet platform they use. It kind of bothers me, if a student doesn't send me the GoogleMeet ID, they need, it kind of worries me – will the interpreter have a hard time finding the place they need to be? Also, I've kind of had problems with one class, I've had a hard time getting into class, I've had steps of getting into class one way, like why can't I just type in the meeting ID. It's literally bad, because I can only see one person, I can't see the whole class or the interpreters, which makes me frustrated. And

also, for a couple of the events, I have sent emails requesting interpreters. But they didn't hire interpreters for one of those. I was kind of lucky for one, it was an event in person, and I didn't even need an interpreter, so I was lucky that time. So, it's kind of hard, sometimes the teacher will just continue talking and talking, and that's kind of hard for the interpreter to keep up. And also, like if I click on "remove screen" I won't see them, it's kind of hard, because when the teacher is sharing their screen, the screen is small, and there's no captioning. Which is hard for me, I can't see really small things that well.

Similarly, they spoke to the challenges they faced in terms of access while attending Sunday chapel services on campus,

It can also be tricky on Sundays, because not many people want to get up in the morning. So, it can be hard. For example, this one interpreter whose interpreting style I don't always understand. Cause for signs I prefer ASL word order. And there's another preferred interpreter I have, but she's not always available to interpret. So, I had to bear with, stay with, the other interpreter, even though I couldn't understand her. Because otherwise, if my preferred interpreter wasn't available, I wouldn't have anyone.

The narratives provided by the deaf faculty and student clearly show experiences of disempowerment while also demonstrating the importance of nuances in language. In conjunction with the power dynamics of higher education previously mentioned by Parsons (2005) and Maguire (2009), Hutcheon and Wolbring (2012) noted internalized ableism in the response of disabled students interviewed about their experience and policy in higher education,

Language within disability policy often describes accommodations as a "burden" or an "obligation" ...In describing accommodations in this way, and often within legal and biomedical frameworks, the university creates a power-inscribed university-student

relationship. This language also contributes to well-known ableist significations of ability- and functionality-diverse people. For example, stereotypes of those in wheelchairs as burdens to families, caregivers, and societies are common and become known and internalized by students in need of accommodations. We would like to bring to attention differences in the language used in higher education policy for the ability-diverse (where principles of ability equity are noticeably absent in policy) from the policy language of other equity-seeking groups (where principles of equity, are embedded in the language of policy). The University of Arizona, for example, refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as to the concepts of “undue hardship” ...to describe, and to ensure, the equity of those with presumed disabilities. In contrast, legal language (e.g., “hardship” and “duty”), and what this implies about those it describes, is absent in this university's gender equity policy.

Limitations

Unfortunately, there are perspectives missing from this research that could have furthered the depth of analysis. Specifically, there were no participants from the St. Catherine University administration. This was in part due to an oversight of recruitment methods, in which it was assumed administration would receive notification of this study by their assumed “staff” status. That being said, there were multiple instances during interviews in which participants mentioned not knowing or being unsure of official decision-making and policy creation from administration. An administrator's perspective could have possibly addressed this and would have provided valuable insight into the inner workings of policy decision making at St. Kate's. Furthermore, there were no participants from the disability services office. This perspective, similar to administration, could have provided additional insight into policy decision making,

creation, and maintenance. Additional deaf perspectives could have provided additional depth and nuance to this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the interpreting policies and procedures at St. Kate's through the often overlooked and invalidated opinions of stakeholders. Specifically, it addresses the question of how the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders relate to the interpreting policy at St. Catherine University. In doing so, this research aimed to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

Research up until this point has addressed many issues within the field of higher education and policy. Faculty have been found to want to be involved in the creation and implementation of policies within their institutions and have also voiced a lack of knowledge and power in regard to policy making procedures (Maguire, 2009). In a similar vein, studies called for the involvement of disabled voices, specifically students, in the creation and maintenance of higher education policy. Furthermore, findings have shown that disabled faculty and students face their own unique set of barriers. Despite the daily battles towards equity, disabled faculty, staff, and students are often forced to broach these topics. These individuals are often categorized by their disability, while other aspects of their identity are forgotten, misunderstood, and invalidated (Abes & Wallace, 2018; Robinson & Henner, 2018; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012).

The narratives collected through this research provided a rich exploration of experiences and perspectives of stakeholders within the St. Kate's community. With the many themes found, knowledge was an underlying connection between narratives. Specifically, seemingly unique to this study is the explicit lack of knowledge of the interpreting policies mentioned by all participants, regardless of role. That being said, the interesting dichotomy of experience vs.

procedure could be interpreted as a lack of knowledge leading to a more positive experience. Likewise, while positive change was mentioned, there was an overall lack of knowledge regarding the *how* and *why* these changes occurred. While many survey respondents spoke positive in regard to communication, interview participants specifically mentioned concerns with how information is shared and by whom. Lastly, the experiences of disempowerment mentioned by the deaf interview participants often revolved around an aspect of knowledge as well, whether that was their own experiences being shared and promptly overlooked, or the lack of knowledge of their hearing counterparts.

Equal parts interesting and telling was what was able to be found in terms of interpreting policy. The language on the University website was explicitly positive when speaking to student accommodations, mentioning a value of diversity alongside an individualized and flexible process while working with staff. Additionally, the Interpreter Handbook (2017), provided by O'Neill Center staff, included minimum qualifications alongside many expectations for the ASL interpreters working on campus with students. Important to note, however, is the lack of documentation relating to interpreting work with deaf faculty, especially given the noted challenges they face finding qualified interpreters for their given specializations (Stapleton, 2015).

Given the lack of documentation of official policy, it was generally challenging to find overarching themes within the information provided. While the Interpreter Handbook (2017) provided more detailed information than anything else found, it was out of date and was almost entirely unknown by stakeholders. When looking for themes within this documentation, what was ultimately most telling was what was *not* found. The information lacking in policy corresponds almost entirely with what is lacking in stakeholder knowledge and understanding,

and leaves us wondering: What is the *official* interpreting policy? How was it created and how is it maintained? How is this communicated to stakeholders? How has positive systemic change happened in the past and how can it be achieved moving forward? Who is involved in these changes and why? And lastly, when creating policy, how are we holding ourselves accountable?

The goal of this research was never to provide explicit answers or a step-by-step guide for successful systemic change. As a young white, female, cis-gender, able-bodied, sighted, hearing individual, this study was one way in which my many privileges could be used to bring focus to the often overlooked and marginalized narratives of stakeholders. It is not only essential that space is created and held for stakeholder perspectives, but these individuals must also be included in the process of policy creation from the very beginning and present within our systems at every level.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

Request for Distribution Email

Subject: Request for Distribution - Graduate Study Participation Email

*(This will email be sent to academicaffairs@stkate.edu, studentaffairs@stkate.edu, and alumnae@stkate.edu, bamoore@stkatet.edu for distribution respectively)

Hello,

I am emailing you today as a student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program. I graduated from St. Catherine University's undergraduate programming with a bachelor's degree in Interpreting in 2015 and started the MAISCE program in the summer of 2019. I've also worked as the Program Coordinator/Interpreter in the ASL & Interpreting Department since August 2017. I have therefore had firsthand experience working in and amongst the St. Kate's community as a staff person, as well as acting in the role of an interpreter.

As part of my research, I will be conducting an institutional ethnography on the interpreting policy at St. Kate's. An institutional ethnography generally aims to assess the experiences of individuals within the systems and structures in which they take part. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making. In an effort to gain the perspective of key stakeholders, I need to reach out to our (deaf students;

faculty/staff; alum; contract interpreters) for potential participants. It is important to note, I am incredibly conscious of my potential bias, given my relationship with the University as a staff member as well as a graduate student, and I wanted to speak with you about the best way to reach out to this community.

You'll find my recruitment email and survey below.

Please let me know if you have any questions,

--

Josephine Heyl, NIC

Program Coordinator/Interpreter, ASL and Interpreting Department

Candidate Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity

2004 Randolph Ave #4291 | St. Paul, MN 55105 | Music 201 H

Direct Phone: [651-690-6945](tel:651-690-6945)

Video Phone: [651-964-1431](tel:651-964-1431)

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Recruitment Email

Subject: Graduate Study Participation Survey

Hello,

I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program here at St. Catherine University. I graduated from St. Catherine University's undergraduate programming with a bachelor's degree in Interpreting in 2015 and started the MAISCE program in the summer of 2019. Additionally, I've worked as the Program Coordinator/Interpreter in the ASL & Interpreting Department since August 2017. I have therefore had firsthand experience working in and amongst the St. Kate's community as a staff person, as well as acting in the role of an interpreter.

I am conducting an institutional ethnography on the interpreting policy at St. Kate's and looking to our community for potential participants. An institutional ethnography generally aims to assess the experiences of individuals within the systems and structures in which they take part. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

Who is eligible to participate?

- Individuals affiliated with St. Catherine University in some regard (current or former student, faculty, staff, and/or contractor) within the last 5 years.

- Individuals who have had firsthand experience with interpreting services at St. Catherine University. *Whether hearing or deaf, this includes having worked with an interpreter, provided services, managed services, and/or being involved in the creation of interpreting policies.

Participants can either take part in an interview or decide to fill out a survey (in typed English or participants may send in ASL video responses to jehey1@stkat.edu.)

Please fill out this [Google form](#) by February 26, 2021, if you would like to participate in this study.

Thank you!

--

Josephine Heyl, NIC

Program Coordinator/Interpreter, ASL and Interpreting Department

Candidate Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity

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Direct Phone: [651-690-6945](tel:651-690-6945)

Video Phone: [651-964-1431](tel:651-964-1431)

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Interview Appointment Email

Subject: Interview Date/Time & Consent Form

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview!

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, this study aims to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

***Please respond to this email with your preferred date/time(s) – I will do my best to accommodate all availabilities. Additionally, you’ll find a copy of an Informed Consent & Video Release form attached below, explaining all potential risks of this study. This form must be submitted prior to your interview.**

I have also included the interview questions for your consideration before we meet.

Once again, all interviews will be conducted virtually through Zoom or Google Meet, and video recorded through the recording functions available through each software option. Interviews will be stored on a password protected computer on a private Box account. A password protected backup hard drive will also be used to store videos. Data will be destroyed within two years of the conclusion of the study but no later than May 31, 2023.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Josephine Heyl at jehey1@stkate.edu, 612.655.2663 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

--

Josephine Heyl, NIC

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Pronouns: she, her, hers

Email to Director of O'Neill Center/Request for Policy

Dear Dr. Obah,

I am excited to be contacting you today as a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program here at St. Kate's. The research I will be conducting this Spring 2021 semester focuses on interpreting policies. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate possible disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making. Given the focus of my research, I felt it important to keep you informed in case any questions arise.

As part of this research, I will be conducting interviews with stakeholders across campus, including individuals affiliated with St. Kate's in some regard (current or former student, faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, and/or contracted interpreter within the last 5 years), who have also had firsthand experience with interpreting services at St. Catherine University (receiving services, providing services, managing services, and/or involved in the creation of interpreting policies). There will also be a survey option available for those unable to commit to a full interview.

It is my hope to review the current policies in conjunction with these collected narratives. Upon initial investigation, I was unable to find an interpreting policy listed on the St. Kate's website alongside other access and disability policies. Would you be able to send me these policies or direct me to who I may speak with about this? Additionally, I would love if you were able to participate in this study as well.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!

--

Josephine Heyl, NIC

Program Coordinator/Interpreter, ASL and Interpreting Department

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Pronouns: she, her, hers

Appendix B: Interview Recruitment and Google Survey Form

<https://forms.gle/QtEveHhMDApLPiJv7>

An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University

Details

This study is being conducted by Josephine Heyl, a master's student at St. Catherine University in the Master of Arts Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program. She graduated from St. Catherine University's undergraduate programming with a bachelor's degree in Interpreting in 2015 and started the MAISCE program in the summer of 2019. She's also worked as the Program Coordinator/Interpreter in the ASL & Interpreting Department since August 2017 and has therefore had firsthand experience working in and amongst the St. Kate's community as a staff person, as well as acting in the role of an interpreter.

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, this study aims to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

Who is eligible to participate?

- Individuals affiliated with St. Catherine University in some regard (current or former student, faculty, staff, and/or contractor) within the last 5 years.
- Individuals who have had firsthand experience with interpreting services at St. Catherine University.

*Whether hearing or deaf, this includes having worked with an interpreter, provided services, managed services, and/or being involved in the creation of interpreting policies.

Participants can either take part in an interview or decide to fill out a survey (in typed English or participants may send in ASL video responses to jehey@stkat.edu.).

Interview

Please indicate below if you would like to participate in an interview regarding St. Kate's interpreting polic(ies). All interviews will be conducted virtually through Zoom or Google Meet, and video recorded through the recording functions available through each software option. Interviews will be stored on a password protected computer on a private Box account. A password protected backup hard drive will also be used to store videos. Data will be destroyed within two years of the conclusion of the study but no later than May 31, 2023.

Survey

The survey includes items about your background as well as your experience(s) and perspectives on the interpreting policies and procedures at St. Catherine University. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

*All questions may be answered in typed English or participants may send in ASL video responses to jeheyl@stkat.edu.

Strict protocols will be in place to maintain the anonymity of each participant and the confidentiality of all information shared. However, given the small size of the St. Kate's community, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will also be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Google forms. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researcher, your instructors, peers, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Josephine Heyl at jeheyl@stkat.edu, 612.655.2663 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkat.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Please select one of the options below.

- I would like to participate in an interview.
- I would like to fill out the survey
- I do NOT want to participate in this study.

****If, "I would like to participate in an interview" is selected:***

Interview

Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview!

All interviews will be conducted virtually through Zoom or Google Meet, and video recorded through the recording functions available through each software option. Interviews will be stored on a password protected computer on a private Box account. A password protected backup hard drive will also be used to store videos. Data will be destroyed within two years of the conclusion of the study but no later than May 31, 2023.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Josephine Heyl at jehey1@stkate.edu, 612.655.2663 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

Please include your contact information below.

You will be contacted shortly to set up an interview date/time. *You will receive an Informed Consent & Video Release form that must be reviewed, signed, and submitted before the interview can take place.

Your answer _____

****If, “I would like to fill out the survey” is selected:***

Survey

The survey below includes items about your background as well as your experience(s) and perspectives on the interpreting policies and procedures at St. Catherine University. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

*All questions may be answered in typed English or participants may send in ASL video responses to jehey1@stkat.edu.

Strict protocols will be in place to maintain the anonymity of each participant and the confidentiality of all information shared. However, given the small size of the St. Kate’s community, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will also be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Google forms. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researchers, your instructors, peers, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Josephine Heyl at jehey1@stkate.edu, 612.655.2663 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Survey (~~all questions are duplicated in the form so participants can either type their answers in English or upload an ASL video to respond~~):

1. Tell me about your relationship with St. Kate’s

2. Tell me what you know about interpreting services at St. Kate's and how they function (e.g. requesting an interpreter, confirming interpreting services, providing/receiving interpreter preparation materials, working with an interpreter during an event, etc.)
3. Describe your experience(s) with the interpreting services at St. Kate's
 - a. What was your initial impression?
 - b. Have services changed in your time at St. Kate's? How? Do you know why?
 - c. How have services and/or your experiences changed since COVID?
4. Tell me what you know about the interpreting policy at St. Kate's
 - a. Are you familiar with how this policy was created? If so, please explain
 - b. How did you learn about the interpreting policies? When did you learn?
5. Are there any challenges you have faced with interpreting services?
6. Are there any positive experiences that you've had with interpreting services?
7. Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

* If there is anyone you believe would be interested in or eligible for the study, please send them information about this study and/or my contact information (Josephine Heyl, jehey1@stkate.edu)

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University.

Researcher: Josephine Heyl

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University. The study is being done by Josephine Heyl, a Masters' candidates at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. Josephine graduated from St. Catherine University's undergraduate programming with a bachelor's degree in Interpreting in 2015 and started their Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program in the summer of 2019. Additionally, she's worked as the Program Coordinator/Interpreter in the ASL & Interpreting Department since August 2017. She has therefore had firsthand experience working in and amongst the St. Kate's community as a staff person, as well as acting in the role of an interpreter. The faculty advisor for this study is Erica Alley Ph.D., at St. Catherine University.

Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask any questions you may have before you agree to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making. This study is important because the results may benefit the interpreting policy at St. Kate's by illuminating perspectives that may have previously been overlooked or unknown. This may inform future conversations and decision-making surrounding policy making. Approximately 50 people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be a part of this study because you are:

- Affiliated with St. Catherine University in some regard (current or former student, faculty, staff, and/or contractor) within the last 5 years.
- Have had firsthand experience with interpreting services at St. Catherine University. *Whether hearing or deaf, this includes having worked with an interpreter, provided services, managed services, and/or being involved in the creation of interpreting policies.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

An institutional ethnography generally aims to assess the experiences of individuals within the systems and structures in which they take part. If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- Participate in an hour-long interview to discuss your experiences with and perspectives on the interpreting services and policy at St. Catherine University.
- Optionally review interview transcript for accuracy.

This study will take approximately 1 hour over 1 session. Additionally, participants will be given the option to review their interview transcript, which may take one-two hours or so to complete. In total, this study will take approximately 1-3 hours.

Taking part in this interview is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, you are free to do so.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. It is important to note that if you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and wish to withdraw, you may do so within two weeks of the interview; simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are no anticipated risks to your health or welfare if you participate in this study; however, you will be sharing information regarding your experience with and understanding of the interpreting services at St. Catherine University. This is considered minimal risk because the information that you provide can potentially be associated with you. Strict protocols will be in place to maintain the anonymity of each participant and the confidentiality of all information shared. However, given the small size of the St. Kate's community, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. There is also risk of emotional distress associated with recall of prior challenging or upsetting experiences.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participation in this study. The results of this study may benefit the interpreting policy at St. Kate's by illuminating perspectives that may have previously been overlooked or unknown. This may inform future conversations and decision-making surrounding policy making. Participants may experience a direct benefit of emotional release or cathartic response to having the space and ability to speak to their experiences honestly and openly.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be video recorded and transcribed for analysis. Your name will not be used in association with your interview. Your chosen pseudonym will be used. Additionally, you can clarify and/or skip questions during the interview process.

The researcher will keep the research results in a secure locked and password protected location and only the researcher will have full access to the records while they work on this project. The researcher will finish analyzing the data by May 31, 2021 and will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you by May 31, 2023.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified in the any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, the researcher will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Could my information be used for future research?

Yes, it is possible that your data will be used for additional research. All collected data will be de-identified and may be used for future research or be given to another investigator for future research without gaining additional informed consent. Given the focus of this study, your information may be used for future research in regard to policy making and possibly future institutional ethnographic research at St. Catherine University.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study the researcher team learns about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, they will inform you of these findings.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at jehey1@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Dr. Erica Alley at elalley@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be videotaped/audiotaped.

My signature indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered, and I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions & Script

Interview Questions & Script

Pre-interview script:

Thank you for agreeing to this interview! It should only take about 45 minutes to an hour.

Before we begin, could you tell me what you are being asked to do as a subject in this study? Also, what will you do if you don't wish to answer a question?

To make sure all participants are on the same page, I need to briefly read this script. Today we will be discussing your experience(s) and perspectives of the St. Catherine University interpreting policies and procedures. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

This interview will be video recorded today for the purposes of transcription. Know that any and all references to your interview will be by the pseudonym of your choosing. However, it is important to note given the small size of the St. Kate's community, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Your recorded interview will only be viewed by myself, the researcher.

Do you have any questions about any of the forms you recently filled out?

Before we begin, what is your chosen pseudonym?

Great. Again, this interview should take roughly an hour. If you need a break at any time or have questions later on, please let me know. Now for the interview questions...

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your relationship with St. Kate's
2. Tell me what you know about interpreting services at St. Kate's and how they function (e.g. requesting an interpreter, confirming interpreting services, providing/receiving interpreter preparation materials, working with an interpreter during an event, etc.)
3. Describe your experience(s) with the interpreting services at St. Kate's
 1. What was your initial impression?
 2. Have services changed in your time at St. Kate's? How? Do you know why?
 3. How have services and/or your experiences changed since COVID?

4. Tell me what you know about the interpreting policy at St. Kate's
 1. Are you familiar with how this policy was created? If so, please explain
 2. How did you learn about the interpreting policies? When did you learn?
5. Are there any challenges you have faced with interpreting services?
6. Are there any positive experiences that you've had with interpreting services?
7. Is there anything else you'd like me to know?
8. If there is anyone you believe should be involved in this study, please send them information about this study and/or my contact information (Josephine Heyl, jeheyl@stkate.edu)

Appendix E: Amendments

Amendment to Google form



ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY IRB AMENDMENT REQUEST FORM

Submit your Amendment Request Form for your protocol through Mentor IRB at the bottom of the protocol page.

Investigators may request approval to make amendments in various aspects of a project. All changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Amendments include: changes in experimental design, insertion of new information, correction of errors in text, change in primary investigator, change in study duration, change in numbers of subjects, or number of locations (site). Upon completion of review, an approval notification will be sent to the primary investigator.

Primary Investigator: Josephine Heyl

Date: 2/7/2021

Title of Research Proposal: An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University

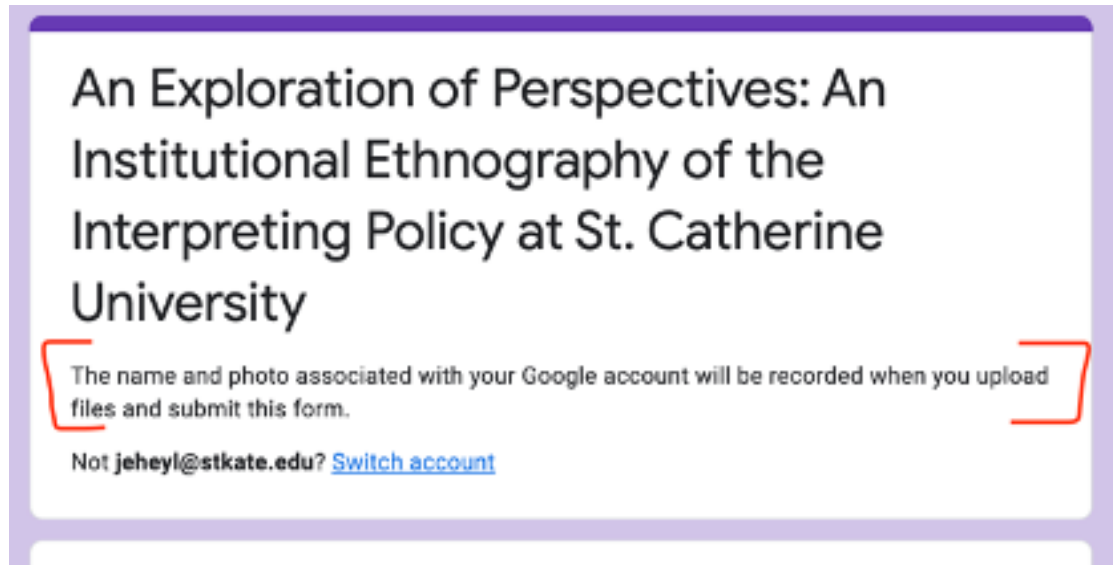
Protocol ID: 1505

1. What are the proposed changes?

Eliminating the "upload an ASL video" option as part of the survey. Participants would instead see an option to send videos directly to me at jehey1@stkate.edu.

2. What is the rationale for proposed changes?

It was recently brought to my attention that when participants open the survey they are prompted to sign-in and see this text:



This is entirely due to the upload video option and the function of Google forms – it seems uploaded files go through Google Drive and require a login for this option to work.

I worry trying to explain this with a note at the top of the survey may confuse folks or seem contradictory. This text is only present because of the Google “upload file” option and would be removed once that option is eliminated from the survey. Participants would instead have the option of sending in ASL videos via email – this will be made clear in the information provided to participants before they take the survey.

3. Do these changes either increase or decrease the benefits of this study?
If Yes, please explain:

No.

4. Do these changes either increase or decrease the risks or the risks of this study?
If Yes, please explain and justify the increase in risk relative to the benefits:

This change would reduce the confidentiality risk for my participants.

If the proposed changes require additional or changes to documents (such as the consent form), list these document titles.

Revised - Interview Recruitment and Survey Google form

Amendment to Alumni Recruitment

Submit your Amendment Request Form for your protocol through Mentor IRB at the bottom of the protocol page.

Investigators may request approval to make amendments in various aspects of a project. All changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Amendments include: changes in experimental design, insertion of new information, correction of errors in text, change in primary investigator, change in study duration, change in numbers of subjects, or number of locations (site). Upon completion of review, an approval notification will be sent to the primary investigator.

Primary Investigator: Josephine Heyl

Date: 2/22/21

Title of Research Proposal: An Exploration of Perspectives: An Institutional Ethnography of the Interpreting Policy at St. Catherine University

Protocol ID: 1505

1. What are the proposed changes?

As recommended by the Alumna department and my research advisor, I would like to post a recruitment flyer to the St. Kate's Facebook and LinkedIn Alumna groups to recruit St. Kate's alumnae. Additionally, I had originally asked participants to reply by February 26th, 2021, but would like to extend this to March 19th, 2021 to allow for additional participants given this new recruitment approach.

2. What is the rationale for proposed changes?

Part of my recruitment has involved speaking with various departments to determine the best way to communicate with specific St. Kate's populations. All departments have been able to send emails and/or provide contacts with the exception of the Alumna Department. They are unable to forward my recruitment email and have instead recommended posting my study to the St. Kate's Alumna Facebook and LinkedIn pages. My research advisor has then suggested I create a flyer for this post, as this would be more effective than posting just text to recruit for my study.

3. Do these changes either increase or decrease the benefits of this study?

No.

4. Do these changes either increase or decrease the risks or the risks of this study?

No.

If the proposed changes require additional or changes to documents (such as the consent form), list these document titles.

*Flyer included below.



St. Kate's Interpreting Policy Research Study **Looking for participants!**

Hello! I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program here at St. Catherine University and am investigating the interpreting policy at St. Kate's. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the interpreting policy and stakeholder experience and perspective at St. Catherine University. In doing so, I aim to investigate disparities of inclusion, equity, and diversity often found in and amongst higher education policy and decision making.

Are you eligible?

- Individuals affiliated with St. Catherine University in some regard (current or former student, faculty, staff, and/or contractor) within the last 5 years.
- Individuals who have had firsthand experience with interpreting services at St. Catherine University.

*Whether hearing or deaf, this includes having worked with an interpreter, provided services, managed services, and/or being involved in the creation of interpreting policies.

Participants can either take part in an interview or decide to fill out a survey (in typed English or participants may send in ASL video responses to jeheyl@stkate.edu).

Please fill out this [Google form](#) by March 19, 2021, if you would like to participate in this study. All questions can be

Thank you!

**If you have any questions about this project, please contact Josephine Heyl at jeheyl@stkate.edu, 612.655.2663 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu.*