

An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Graduates with an Associate of Applied Science Degree from Interpreter Education Programs in Texas

By

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Abstract

Current research on the field of sign language interpreter education notes a lack of multiculturalism and a push for a more diverse pool of instructors is evident. Research about students and graduates of non-white backgrounds from interpreter education programs is limited. This research is a step toward filling this gap by focusing on Hispanic/Latinx graduates of interpreter education programs. This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of six self-identified Hispanic/Latinx graduates from associate-granting American Sign Language-English interpreter education programs in Texas. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Three overarching themes were noted in the participants' stories: personal pride, cultural disconnects, and advantages of cultural awareness. By recognizing the lived experiences and the diversity of their student bodies, instructors and program directors can be more equipped to fully engage with their students.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Impetus

The turning point in my academic and professional career began in New Orleans, Louisiana, during the summer of 2015. Prior to that summer, I had attended many state interpreting conferences hosted by the Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf (TSID) even before becoming certified through the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) in 2001. The 2015 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) conference was my first national interpreting conference and presenters were discussing topics and proposing new ideas I had not been exposed to at previous TSID conferences. Every new day during the conference, I found myself taking a copious amount of notes, including the names of authors and books I wanted to read. My goal was to bring these new ideas and perspectives back home to discuss with colleagues. I could not understand how none of the interpreter educators and interpreters I studied under, mentored under, or worked with had ever mentioned active involvement with RID or attending RID conferences. I felt invigorated and ready to come back to Texas to begin to share new information, resources, and activities.

During the 2015 RID conference, Cogen and Cokely (2015) presented on behalf of the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) on emerging trends in interpreting and their implications for interpreter education. They mentioned one statistic during their presentation that became etched in my brain: 88% of RID members are white. I distinctly remember thinking, “Eighty-eight percent of deaf¹ consumers of interpreting services are not white.” Since that summer, I have paid closer attention to participants who attend workshops that

¹ The decision to use the lowercase form of deaf is done to acknowledge the diversity within the deaf community and the importance in creating space for those people who use signed languages to have discretion in how they wish to be identified (Woodward and Horejes 2016).

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I also attend. Even in South Texas, where the majority population is Hispanic/Latinx², it seems the majority of signed language interpreters in my area are white. I analyzed membership forms for my local organization, Corpus Christi Interpreters for the Deaf (CCID), for July 2015, through June 2016, and the membership was comprised of only 35% Hispanic members; the other 65% were white.

My application to graduate school to study interpreting further was driven by the workshops and presentations I was exposed to at the 2015 RID conference. I wanted to be able to use the knowledge from that conference along with new information learned while in graduate school to become part of the shift toward developing a more diverse pool of signed language interpreters across the country.

Statement of the Problem

Our capacity for communication as human beings plays an essential role in our daily lives. Individuals are capable of conducting conversations with individuals who may use languages different than our own through interpreters. People rely on interpreters to broker the cultural differences between parties to prevent cultural misunderstandings and facilitate information accurately with the speaker or signer's intention intact. Orellana and Garcia (2014) argued that language brokers, such as interpreters, cross linguistic borders, and tap into their full repertoires of language to make implicit and explicit meanings clear for all individuals involved in the language exchange. When the interpreter is fluent in both languages and knowledgeable of all cultures involved, the interpretation is more likely to be effective. Suppose though that an interpreter has the linguistic capabilities to interpret words or signs but does not have a full understanding of all cultures involved in the discourse exchange. The interpretation could be

² For the purpose of this research, the term "Hispanic/Latinx" will be used in reference to the minority group comprised of those with Latin American or Spanish roots. Throughout this document, however, the researcher will utilize the original terms used by each author respectively.

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ineffective due to a misunderstanding or miscommunication of cultural nuances. Although an interpreter's familiarity with varied cultures will not ensure they will not make mistakes in their work, it is less likely that cultural miscues would occur for an interpreter with a strong knowledge of various cultures. To provide the best work possible, interpreters must be aware of languages and cultures, including the cultures of specific racial or ethnic groups.

According to recent Census Bureau estimates, the Hispanic population, the second-largest racial or ethnic group in the United States, continued to expand and reached a record 58.6 million people in 2017 (Krogstad, 2017). With this increase, a rise in the number of American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreters could be expected; however, the statistics indicate certified members of RID are not currently representative of the growing cultural diversity in the nation at large. Membership demographics on RID's website reflect race information for those who self-identified (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. [RID], 2019). For the year 2018, RID reports eighty-seven percent of the certified membership are of Euro-American/White background; Hispanic/Latino(a) certified interpreters make up the second largest ethnic group, though this group totals a meager five percent of RID's certified membership. There are several reasons these numbers are not representative of the make-up of the US population. These could include, for example, barriers experienced by minorities in higher education and career attainment.

Though RID currently requires the completion of a bachelor's degree (or the alternative pathway) to sit for certification, many students graduate from associate-level interpreter education programs (IEPs) because a vast majority of them are located in community college settings (Cox, 2013). Alfonso (2006) argued that due to convenient schedules and locations, low tuition, and the open access policies associated with community colleges, they have traditionally

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served as the primary point of access to higher education for economically and academically disadvantaged groups, such as Hispanic/Latinx students. Even though Hispanic students complete associate degrees at rates comparable to their white peers, Hispanic students are at risk of not completing their educational objectives (Alfonso, 2006). Some noteworthy factors that may influence Hispanic students' educational experience include: enrolling in occupational majors compared to academic majors, having parents who have not yet completed their bachelors' degrees, having a child when they begin postsecondary education, as well as the size of the institution (Alfonso, 2006).

If Hispanic students attain associate degrees comparable with their white peers, Hispanics should complete IEPs and become certified interpreters at the same rate as their white counterparts. The statistics previously noted from RID, however, indicate a vastly different reality. If Hispanic students are attending colleges and universities at a higher rate every year, why is there little increase in the number of Hispanic signed language interpreters in the field?

During 1996-2000, the U.S. Department of Education funded the National Multicultural Interpreter Project (NMIP) which collected data from IEPs across the United States. According to the 1998 NMIP survey of full and part-time faculty and staff of IEPs, 90.5% were Euro-American/White and 10% represented all other racial/ethnic groups (Mooney, 2000). Cox (2013) discussed signed language IEPs growing in popularity, yet, there are few options for instructors within those programs to be formally trained. As a result, colleges and universities recruit individuals who are experts in the content, but lack formal training in pedagogy (Cox, 2013). Because of the large number of white practitioners, there are obviously more white instructors to be found. However, the lack of culturally diverse representation in ASL-English interpreter practitioners and signed language interpreter instructors is detrimental to students of IEPs. More

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importantly, this represents a dishonor to the incredibly diverse and multicultural deaf communities. If the ethnic make-up and cultural awareness of signed language interpreters is limited, deaf and hearing³ consumers may unfortunately miss opportunities for rich interpreter-mediated conversations to be facilitated because of proper multicultural knowledge on behalf of the interpreter. To date, this researcher has not identified published resources that document the experiences of students of ASL-English IEPs, graduates of IEPs, or working interpreters who identify as Hispanic/Latinx.

The 2010 United States Census Bureau reports 50.5 million Americans are of Hispanic⁴ descent (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). The U.S. Census does not ask if those experiencing hearing difficulties require the utilization of signed language interpreters; however, only two years later, Brault (2012) recounted that approximately 7.6 million Americans reported experiencing hearing difficulty. More signed language interpreters with diverse backgrounds are needed to effectively navigate the multicultural identities of deaf communities (Hunt, 2015). Because of the high number of Hispanic people in the U.S., those with hearing loss could benefit from the availability of more Hispanic interpreters. The absence of research exploring the disparity in diversity among signed language interpreters in the United States drives this study. Hearing and deaf consumers possess cultural and linguistic needs that simply cannot be fulfilled by a signed language interpreting field whose percentage of Euro American/white members is 87%.

Current research exploring IEPs has largely focused on bridging the gap between IEP classrooms and real-world interpreting work (Wang, 2015; Godfrey, 2010). Other popular areas

³ Within ASL Interpreting and Deaf Studies, there are different terms used to describe people who use a spoken and auditory language to communicate as “hearing.” Another term, which centers deaf people’s experience, is “non-deaf.” For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to use the more common term “hearing.”

⁴ Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates people of Hispanic origin include those who are: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

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of inquiry pertaining to IEPs include whether the programs have linguistic entrance requirements (Lucas, 2001), offer classes with information about multiculturalism and multilingualism (McKee & Davis, 2010), or employ highly qualified instructors (Marschark & Spencer, 2010). Educators in IEPs are often concerned with “improving student outcomes in course-work, retaining students in their programs and preparing the most qualified interpreters possible within a relatively short period of formal instruction” (Shaw & Hughes, 2006, p. 196). Gertz and Boudreault (2016) state graduates of interpreting programs are often viewed as generalists who possess basic skills to work in some community settings, but lack skills in areas of specialty such as K-12 educational settings, medical and mental health settings, and legal settings. These studies are important to the field as a whole; however, the paucity of research specifically about student experiences must be acknowledged and explored.

Since the vast majority of IEPs are located in community college settings (Cox, 2013) and community colleges have customarily been the primary point of access to higher education for Hispanic students (Alfonso, 2006), it seems two-year IEPs would provide Hispanic students a favorable educational experience with a completion rate comparable to their white peers. Other factors also exist for Hispanic students to excel in interpreting programs. For example, Delgado, Guerrero, Goggin, and Ellis (1999) noted the growth of the Hispanic population will inevitably result in greater numbers of bilingual speakers of Spanish and English. Bilingualism (Spanish and English) could be classified as an added qualification for interpreting students who already possess the mental flexibility to utilize two or more languages (Obasi, 2013; Shaw & Hughes, 2006). Individuals who are bilingual are prepared to become multilingual since the experience of learning a second language prepares them for learning a third language (Gertz & Boudreault, 2016), in this case, ASL. Another attribute for bilingual Hispanic students is they are more

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flexible in their thinking and more open to varied worldviews, which can contribute positively to their education in an ASL-English IEP. If greater numbers of Hispanic students graduate from IEPs across the country, then the pool of interpreters with diverse language and cultural backgrounds will strengthen.

Obasi (2013) argued that a “significant gap still exists in the education, research, training, and practice arena regarding issues of race and ethnicity in signed language interpreting,” (p. 109). This gap can be mitigated with practicing interpreter’s acknowledgement of the existence of current racial and ethnic disparities, white privilege, power inequities, oppression, and social injustices (Rothenberg, 2016; Alexander, 2012). Once individuals recognize that these societal phenomena are ever-present in some Americans daily lives, deaf individuals included, work to reduce these prejudices and biases can begin.

Information reported by the findings of the NMIP (Mooney, 2000) can benefit interpreter educators and interpreters who are already practicing in the field, regardless of their years of experience. The NMIP reported that faculty and staff working in ASL IEPs in 1998 were 90.5% Euro-American/white while 76.4% of students enrolled in ASL IEPs were classified as Euro-American/white (Mooney, 2000). More recent percentages for faculty, staff, and student demographics were not available beyond NMIP’s reports from 1998; however, those percentages, coupled with RID’s statistics, presents a perfect group to become more familiar with their invisible privilege (Rothenberg, 2016).

White privilege, which a majority of practicing interpreters, interpreter educators, and interpreting students possess (according to reported statistics of race/ethnicity in IEPs and in the field), has been defined as “the unearned advantages and benefits that accrues to White ⁵folks by virtue of a system normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions of their group” (Sue,

⁵ Follows original text’s capitalization of “White”

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2003, p. 137). Some white individuals are not even aware they possess white privilege because it can manifest itself differently based on a person's socioeconomic status, job type, neighborhood, healthcare, churches, or educational curricula (Rothenberg, 2016). Sue (2013) also identified white privilege as being "deeply embedded in the structural, systemic, and culture workings of U.S. society; and it operates within an invisible veil of unspoken and protected secrecy" (p. 137).

Given the history of privileges whites have been given in the United States, it is not difficult to understand why it is hard for some to entertain the notion that advantages they receive are unfairly obtained by virtue of their skin color. Increased knowledge of privilege, power, oppression, and multiculturalism will enable interpreters to be more cognizant of the types of interpreting work they accept. The willingness to attend events, workshops, and conferences hosted by presenters or groups of color can only add to the cultural competency of practicing interpreters, interpreter educators, and students in IEPs.

Deaf people encompass a diverse group (Padden & Humphries, 2005) whose languages do not occupy categories that can be only black or white (Monikowski, 2017). Deaf individuals reflect intersectionality. Collins and Bilge (2016) stated intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, and other self-identifiers operate, not as unitary mutually exclusive entities, but as shared constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities. Another definition for intersectionality refers to "the interactivity of social identity structures such as race, class, and gender in fostering life experiences, especially experiences of privilege and oppression" (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 90).

Deaf individuals are Hispanic deaf, Black deaf, Asian deaf, American Indian deaf, and white deaf. Some are also members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) communities. Some are wealthy and educated while others live in poverty and are

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uneducated. All those intersecting categories of identity provide even more reason for diverse interpreters to begin and continue working in deaf communities. It is important for members of deaf communities to experience cultural representation in their everyday lives and in interpreted interactions. If an interpreter has experienced many of the same intersections as a deaf or hearing consumer, the interaction is more likely to be successful than an interpreter with fewer intersections.

Research Question

Hispanic signed language interpreters who share lived experiences with deaf and hearing consumers will be able to use that cultural proficiency to their advantage and navigate cultural nuances as smoothly as possible. In order to increase the pool of interpreters for Hispanic/Latinx deaf populations, more Hispanic/Latinx interpreters who share those backgrounds should be educated. Faculty and administrators of those IEPs can focus on the outcomes of this research to improve their understanding of the perspectives of Hispanic/Latinx students enrolled in programs with the goal of becoming ASL-English sign language interpreters. The question guiding this research is: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx students who have graduated with an Associate of Applied Science degree in an ASL-English IEP in Texas?

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Education of individuals from marginalized communities has been the subject of past and contemporary literature. Researchers have studied diverse factors which examine the value of post-secondary education in Hispanic/Latinx communities and the barriers students may experience to being successful (Alfonso, 2006; Arbona & Nora, 2007; Garza & Landeck, 2004; Martone, 2013).

Summations from research showed that at least 70% of Hispanics preferred pursuing associate degrees owing to their ingenuity and their authenticity in their respective fields (Alfonso, 2006). One key factor that was identified to impact the attainment of an associate degree was the issue of different socioeconomic status (Alfonso, 2006). The author went further to draw comparisons between the Latino and white communities with conclusions suggesting that at least 60% of first generation college students were from the Hispanic/Latinx community. Martone (2013) noted that at least 59% of white people depended on their parents' income compared to 41% in the Hispanic community. This often prompts Hispanic students to look for jobs to ensure that they support their own education. Opportunities afforded to white people are quite different than those available to Hispanic people and will be discussed further in the next section of this paper. Alfonso (2006) presented a descriptive analysis that takes into account that most Hispanic/Latino associate degree seekers have a high rate of completion compared to their white counterparts. This suggests that Hispanic community members are more successful in their attainment of two-year educational objectives, such as certificates and associate degrees, as compared to only 42% of white people completing their studies at a two-year institution.

Factors Impacting Educational Attainment in the Hispanic/Latinx Community

Comparative research has been a key tool used by researchers in determining the dramatic differences in the graduation rates between both Hispanic/Latinx communities and those not from this community. By the end of the 20th century, it was noted that Latinos between the ages of 19-21 years had completed fewer first-year college classes compared to other non-Latinos (Garza & Landeck, 2004). Factors that affected the completion of an associate degree in the Hispanic⁶ community can be categorized into either personal or institutional influences (Garza & Landeck, 2004). Research by Alfonso (2006) focused on how general factors influence the education of Hispanics with conclusions drawn showing that they are inclusive of the family background factors which consist of attending college part-time, working while enrolled in college, being the first of their family to attend college, and already having children while enrolled.

Impact of family on educational attainment. Martone (2013) argued that family is a key institution in the Hispanic community coupled with previous research by Nuñez and Kim (2012), that utilized a Latino sample, which showed that children's education was dependent on parental education. Parents with high levels of educational attainment tended to provide their children with the requisite environment vital in encouraging education (Martone, 2013). In addition, there was a high probability that those with high levels had income available to support the foundation for their children (Martone, 2013). Martone (2013) also showed that children living in single-parent families, divorced families, as well as those children having many siblings, are pre-exposed to low levels of education. This may be attributed to the trend that one-parent families may have low-income rates in the Hispanic community with the parent finding it hard to manage their child's behavior or discuss their school experiences, including helping with

⁶ The terms Latino and Hispanic are used interchangeably by Garza and Landeck (2004).

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homework (Martone, 2013). The author addressed the probability of the financial and parental resources available for every child diminishing as a result of living with more siblings (Martone, 2013).

Alienation due to origin. Factors such as short duration of residence as a U.S. citizen, language background that is not English, as well as foreign birth, may have been key predictors of Hispanic/Latinx students' abilities to complete an associate degree. Arbona and Nora (2007) showed that being able to speak English fluently and coherently is a key factor that helps students remain in school. In contrast, foreign birth affected the motivation levels of students striving to earn associate degrees (Arbona & Nora, 2007). The impact may stem from low levels of competency in English comprehension which inadvertently affects academic levels (Arbona & Nora, 2007). The low motivation levels due to lack of English comprehension and proficiency may have prompted some students to drop out of school (Garza & Landeck, 2004).

Alfonso (2006) noted that there is 12% likelihood that Hispanic students who enrolled in occupational-related programs at the sub-baccalaureate, or community college level, were bound to complete their studies. Those occupational-related programs were those with a vocational focus and tended to lead to working after completing a two-year certificate or degree, as opposed to completion of a two-year transfer degree to finish studies at a four-year institution. This occurred even after all the variables that may have affected their educational pathways are held constant, including but not limited to socioeconomic status and institutional availability (Alfonso, 2006). There was also, however, a 12% probability that children of parents that possess a bachelor's degree are more likely to attain their educational objectives (Alfonso, 2006).

Brooks et al. (2012) summarized that instructors from the minority groups were bound to go past the set curriculum content to include cultural and linguistic experiences. The inclusion of

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the two precepts helped the students understand what was being taught. Brooks et al. (2012) further recommended that educational institutions should implement exchange programs which will have a positive impact on the nexus forged between various cultures. West Oyedele (2015), who researched African American/Black sign language interpreters and consumers of interpreting services, noted that the lack of hiring and retention of interpreter educators and interpreters from non-European/white backgrounds had an adverse impact on sign language interpreter education and the field of sign language interpreting. The results from the NMIP found that the majority of educators in sign language interpreting programs in the United States were of European or White descent (Mooney, 2000). The dearth of multicultural sign language interpreter educators and nationally certified signed language interpreters (RID, 2018), impacts students of interpreting programs as they train with mostly European/white educators and mentors. Non-European/white interpreters tended to be dismissed by consumers of interpreting services because most perceived the interpretation field to be one that is not racially diverse (West Oyedele, 2015). West Oyedele (2015) and Brooks et al. (2012) believed that expanding the pool of multicultural educators is imperative for minority students to accomplish educational goals.

Low enrollment of a critical mass of Hispanic students. Critical mass refers to a level of representation that brings comfort or familiarity within an education environment, reducing chances for experiences of oppression or marginalization, and promoting retention and persistence for minority students (Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007). Low enrollment of Hispanic/Latinx students at an institution also played a significant role in slowing the process of attaining an associate degree for these students. Most Hispanic students followed non-traditional enrollment pathways since they depended on their parents'

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income and came from lower-income households than their white counterparts (Alfonso, 2006). This leads to Hispanic students' institutional choices differing considerably compared to their white counterparts, with only a small number of Hispanic students preferring private institutions. At least 41% of Hispanics were found in modern urban colleges with 28% of whites taking up the remaining slots (Alfonso, 2006).

Contrary to popular belief, Hispanic students are not afforded the same opportunities as whites in community colleges because they came from lower-income families (Arbona & Nora, 2007). Research by Arbona and Nora (2007) indicated that a quarter percentile of Latino students who attended institutions for beginning post-secondary students intended to move out to other institutions due to the low enrollment of other Hispanic students. Only 6% of Hispanics who began in community colleges were awarded bachelors' degrees (Alfonso, 2006). Alfonso (2006) concluded that Hispanic students were as likely to attain their associate degrees compared to their white peers even when outside variables affected their day to day endeavors.

Other factors' impacts on educational attainment. The size of an institution may have been related to the motivation levels of students pursuing an associate degree. Alfonso (2006) explained that "students attending institutions that enroll between 2,001 and 10,000 students are 16% less likely to complete an associate degree than those who attend an institution that enrolls 2,000 or fewer students" (p. 22). This was attributed to the counseling and guidance options offered in small institutions compared to large institutions, where counseling and guidance were tailored to meet the needs of the individual student (Alfonso, 2006). Personalized counseling was important in the integration of both the social and academic facets of a student. Tinto (1993) discussed several colleges and universities that offered specialized advising and counseling for students of color aimed at reducing student attrition for minority groups. The author explained

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that although counselors and advisors of like ethnicity were not a requirement for these specialized programs, “experience tells us that students of color will be more likely to utilize those services when the counselors and/or advisors are of similar ethnicity” (Tinto, 1993, p. 185). If college students were able to seek advice from advisors and counselors who share similar ethnic backgrounds, a more personalized and comfortable experience for students of color could be achievable.

Time was also a key factor in the issue of institutional impact on associate degree attainment with students who attend classes for at least 25-75% of the time; they were most likely to attain their degree compared to those with less than the number mentioned above (Alfonso, 2006). Students who experienced an interruption in the enrollment process were 9% less likely to complete their studies; those students without any interruptions had a 12% probability of being successful (Alfonso, 2006). Age played a role in the completion rates of the associate level degrees as older students tended to have higher rates of completion as well as those who were married (Alfonso, 2006). Hispanic students who were not firstborns also had a high chance of finishing school with high parental educations setting the precedence for educational achievement (Alfonso, 2006). Being enrolled when one has children, as well as being enrolled in an institution which is midsize or large, tended to reduce the capability of Hispanic students to achieve their degrees (Alfonso, 2006).

Sign Language Interpreter Education

Importance of interpreting education in contemporary society. The use of ASL for professional interpreting services is viewed to be a new profession in the field of human service. Demands for signed language interpreting has increased due to legal regulations in place to ensure accessibility for deaf individuals who have varied linguistic needs in a range of aspects of

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their lives: financial, legal, medical, as well as educational settings (Cox, 2013). Godfrey (2010) showed that the demand for interpreters has increased over the past decade with recommendations drawn showing that the profession was ill- prepared for the surge in demand.

The history of IEPs dates back to the mid-20th century with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 setting the precedence for the formulation and implementation of interpreter training programs, as they were initially known (Godfrey, 2010). The programs were rolled out in New Orleans, California, New York, and Minnesota with continued demand leading to the amalgamation of the programs with two-year courses found in vocational training centers and community colleges (Godfrey, 2010). Towards the end of the 20th century, IEPs began to expand beyond skill-focused training to include a more broad liberal arts base and comprehensive skill training (Godfrey, 2010). The change indicated that two years is a short time for one to be knowledgeable with all the linguistic and cultural components of the discipline (Godfrey, 2010). This led to the emergence of four-year degree programs with a consensus held among practitioners and researchers that more education beyond a two-year program is vital for interpreters (Godfrey, 2010). After the first baccalaureate IEP was established in 1974, some colleges and universities followed suit; however, it was not until December 2007 that RID ruled that beginning in 2012, any candidate for certification for their national interpreting exam must have a bachelor's degree (Godfrey, 2010). Despite the 2012 requirement for a bachelor's degree, both two-year associate and four-year bachelor IEPs are still running throughout the country.

Gaps in interpreting programs. Godfrey (2010) argued the discipline of interpreter education is encountering two predicaments: work-readiness gap and the credentials gap. The readiness and credential gaps worked in tandem with each other, although there is a need for an effective distinction to be made (Godfrey, 2010). The author indicated that the work-readiness

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gap is a phenomenon where graduates possessing the requisite skills as signed language interpreters were not employed as interpreters after graduating from their respective associate or bachelor IEPs. With the work-readiness gap, the students who graduated, even though they may have possessed requisite skills, were not effectively prepared to be employed in different settings as interpreters. The credential gap, on the other hand, showed students were ready to be employed and provide their services, but they were not able to obtain the required credentials which have been stipulated by the federal or state government (Godfrey, 2010). Most students who graduated from IEPs were not prepared to face the reality of the standards they needed to satisfy for employment (Godfrey, 2010).

Godfrey (2010) noted that the rise in demand for interpreters as well as “poor governmental oversight” (p. 5) may have led interpreters who had below par skills to work in settings that were way above their skill set. Policy makers have had the difficult task of measuring the gap in work-readiness through the use of statistics (Godfrey, 2010). Godfrey (2010) also presented and analyzed the basis behind the current credential readiness gap; the results showed that an apparent lack in required language skills played a major role. Many community colleges had open-door enrollment policies so students entering two-year IEPs began their studies with less than fluent or no ASL skills (Godfrey, 2010). They were then expected to learn ASL and the skill of interpreting simultaneously in two years, which led to practitioners entering the workforce with a lack of sign language proficiency (Godfrey, 2010).

The research also noted educators need to be skilled and trained efficiently to give the students an effective hands-on approach into how they can handle the various challenges posed on a daily basis (Godfrey, 2010).

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While Godfrey addressed gaps occurring after a student's completion of an IEP, West Oyedele (2015) and Nakahara (2016) interviewed African American/Black and Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) signed language interpreter practitioners, respectively, and those practitioners pointed out gaps in their own IEP experiences. Most literature published about IEPs and their students does not focus on the experiences of students from traditionally marginalized communities. These two resources provide salient research to my own question about the lived experiences of signed language interpreting students from culturally marginalized groups and the importance of a multicultural pool of signed language interpreters to serve deaf communities.

With the exception of reaching out to Asian American/Pacific Islander consumers of interpreting services, Nakahara (2016) replicated West Oyedele's (2015) research regarding the perceptions of cultural competence in the field of signed language interpreting with each respective group. West Oyedele (2015) found in one focus group that "when the consumer and interpreter did not share the same racial identity, the consumer perceived the interpreter to be lacking in cultural competence and was more likely to feel as though the interpreter was not a match" (p. 37). This does not mean an interpreter of a different cultural identity from the consumer cannot effectively work for the consumer; however, having a similar cultural identity can introduce feelings of confidence and power for the consumer (West Oyedele, 2015). West Oyedele's (2015) research also showed that African American/Black deaf consumers overwhelmingly felt that interpreters who were also African American/Black were more culturally competent as practitioners and a better overall fit. West Oyedele (2015) reported:

All research participants recognized that their experiences as African American/Black interpreters or interpreters from other marginalized groups mean that they have not only a different worldview, but they have unique experiences from their colleagues who are from the majority culture. The majority of survey respondents (76%) felt that they had, with at least moderate frequency,

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experiences that their non-African American/Black colleagues struggle to understand. (p. 81)

Although Nakahara's (2016) study did not delve into the needs of the consumer, several interpreters interviewed reported having positive reactions from Asian and AAPI deaf consumers while others commented they felt having an AAPI interpreter brought in a level of comfort for the consumers.

Twelve of thirteen focus group and interview participants from West Oyedele's (2015) study reported having little to no discussion in their IEPs about multiculturalism or cultural competence. Twenty-three out of forty-six participants who attended an IEP in Nakahara's (2016) survey said there was little to no discussion of multiculturalism as it pertained to working with consumers with one participant adding they felt sensitivity training was also lacking in their program. West Oyedele (2015) noted:

Participants reported that their programs made broad generalizations about their cultures, expected them to be the experts on their cultures, and stated that their programs looked superficially at racial issues and no other historical contexts. Overwhelmingly, though, the vast majority of participants shared that their programs did not broach these subjects at all. (p. 45)

Nakahara's (2016) participants noted a desire for access to different signing styles, customs, and vocabulary in ASL and English, as well as courses focusing on diversity that spanned beyond just deaf and hearing cultures. One of West Oyedele's (2015) participants noted that their instructor's presentation of information dealt only with deafness as a cultural dynamic while no other ethnicity was discussed. Their courses were "taught from a Caucasian, deaf-educated perspective and Euro-centric perspective" (p. 46). Participants from Nakahara's (2016) study also reported few educators and mentors of color and one interviewee expressed:

I would have liked to have had more mentors or teachers who are also interpreters of color who can talk about their experiences. Because out in the field, you do experience microaggressions from your colleagues, from other interpreters as well

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as the hearing counterparts that you work with, that I work with anyways. Also, learning how to deal with that and how do you work around that, and you can't have those kinds of conversations when the interpreter you're talking to is your white instructor.

Eighty-five percent of West Oyedele's respondents were in classrooms with three or fewer African American/Black classmates, fifty-seven percent had no African American/Black guest presenters come into their programs or their programs did not have any guest presenters at all. Seventy-six percent of respondents had no access to an African American/Black educator in their IEP, and seventy-two percent had no access to mentors during their IEP or their IEP did not offer mentoring. Those percentages suggested a lack of critical mass for African American/Black interpreters who matriculate through IEPs. Even though some educators in IEPs intended to bring cultural competence practices into the classroom, it was challenging to integrate those teachings into the classroom effectively since many of those educators were from the majority culture and did not have the lived experiences to relate to the teachings (West Oyedele, 2015).

Multicultural curriculum for interpreter educators. The NMIP was created from the work of interpreters and interpreter educators from varied cultural backgrounds. This work was significant because its extensive curriculum emphasized the importance of multicultural competencies (Mooney, 2000). One of the goals of the NMIP is to recruit more interpreters of color. The program lays out a step-by-step approach to enriching interpreting curriculum.

The NMIP begins with the three layers of curriculum change as: a) inclusion, which "is to include the 'omitted' or to correct the stereotyped portrayals of groups"; b) infusion as "multicultural content is 'infused' into all aspects of the curriculum on a regular and routine basis" (e.g., curriculum, materials, media, etc.); c) and transformation and change which go "beyond inclusion and infusion to a core value paradigm shift that leads to strong social action, equality, and transformative dimensions" (Mooney, 2000, p. 4).

The curriculum and materials are intended for use in and type of college-based IEPs, in-service trainings, distance education courses, independent study courses, or workshops and

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conferences at any level (Mooney, 2000). Utilization of the NMIP curriculum could enrich the education students receive during their IEPs to become more proficient with multicultural competencies.

Although this curriculum has been publicly available for free, it is unknown exactly how many IEPs may use sections of this work in their programs. Recent research, however, does shed some light onto this situation. Quinto-Pozos, Martinez, Suarez, and Zeck (2018) surveyed 62 IEPs across the United States. They received responses from 31 programs that represented 9 states and found that 33% of those programs reported using NMIP materials (Quinto-Pozos, et al., 2018). It is interesting to note the state with the most responses was Texas. Ten programs reported using the NMIP curriculum; seven programs cited lack of expertise as a reason for not using the curriculum, and another seven programs reported a lack of awareness of the curriculum (Quito-Pozos, et al., 2018).

Importance of Cultural Diversity in Education

The ability and willingness to acknowledge, understand, and embrace cultural diversity is one of the most important components of today's rapidly changing world (Amyx & Bristow, 2012). Cox (1994) suggested that cultural diversity can be defined by the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance. Amyx and Bristow (2012) conducted a study of 339 undergraduate students attending state universities in order to assess the importance of cultural diversity in the students' educational environments. They found 60% of respondents "considered cultural diversity to be at least a somewhat important component of the university learning environment" (Amyx & Bristow, 2012, p. 57). Amyx and Bristow (2012) argued that it is important for administrators to replicate their seven question survey at their respective campuses in order to foster the "development of programs

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designed to increase student perceptions and understanding of the importance of cultural diversity as a part of the academic experience” (p. 58). Since the current generation of college students is the most racially and ethnically diverse in the nation’s history (Renn & Reason, 2012), there is a potential for increased learning, “as students learn to manage cross-difference interactions and improve interpersonal relationships, if postsecondary educators can effectively prepare students for such interactions” (Renn & Reason, 2012, p. 4). Managing cultural diversity in postsecondary classrooms has become an increasingly significant concern (Thompson & Thompson, 1996). Trends in growth in college enrollment by students from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are expected to continue (Renn & Reason, 2012).

Chapter 3: Methodology

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This pilot study adopted an exploratory phenomenological approach focused on the lived experiences of self-identified Hispanic/Latinx graduates of IEPs in Texas. Because of the lack of research thus far on this topic, a pilot study using a focused sample of participants is an appropriate method to begin creating a representation of pertinent themes and experiences (Hale & Napier, 2013) of Hispanic/Latinx students in associate degree-granting IEPs. Conducting semi-structured interviews provided an insight to the lived experiences of six former students of Texas IEPs and how they experienced their time during their programs (Hale & Napier, 2013; Seidman, 2013). Their experiences were analyzed using a descriptive phenomenological theoretical framework (Vagle, 2018).

Van Manen (1990) states, “Lived experience is what we experience as it happens, but we can only get at what we experience after it happens through a reconstruction of that experience” (p. 38). In a subsequent edition to his earlier work, Van Manen (2013) explained the phenomenological method does not offer a set procedural system, rather the method requires the ability to be insightful, reflective, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experiences. This research employed a qualitative approach and framework allowing participants to provide anecdotes of their experiences as they lived and understood phenomena during their time enrolled in their respective IEPs.

This researcher selected phenomenology and the use of interviews because of the genuine interest in the stories of others. Seidman (2013) advocated interviewing is a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues through understanding the experiences of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues and interviews affirm “the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration” (p. 13).

Data Collection

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Data for this pilot study were collected over a four-month period, from January to April of 2019. For this study, participants were recruited using a recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) through online posting as well as emailing to the program directors of each of the colleges that grant associate of applied science degrees in signed language interpreting in Texas. Demographic information about participants was collected through an online survey (see Appendix B) in order to ensure each participant was indeed a graduate of an IEP in Texas between the years of 2009 to 2018. If participants were interested in a one-on-one, online follow-up interview, their email address was collected at the end of the survey.

A total of nine survey respondents indicated they were interested in the one-on-one, online follow-up interview and each respondent was sent an email asking to schedule a date and time for the interview. Six participants responded back to the researcher's email and provided dates and times of availability. Appointments were set and each participant was sent an Informed Consent Form for the online interview (see Appendix C) and a Videotape Release Form (see Appendix D) to be read, signed, and returned to the researcher prior to beginning the online interview.

Before each online interview began, each participant chose their own pseudonym to be used in the results of the study. The online interviews lasted anywhere from 21 minutes to 45 minutes. Interviews were conducted online via a video conferencing website called appear.in and all participants utilized spoken English. Each interview was recorded with a screen capture tool called Snagit. The researcher used a script (see Appendix E) to read to each participant to gain and record consent before beginning the interview. The semi-structured interview was comprised of twelve questions and four potential follow-up questions (see Appendix E) to allow the

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participants to explain their perspective of their experiences during their time enrolled in their respective IEPs.

Participants

Alex⁷ graduated from her IEP in 2016 while Carlos, Christi, and Israel all graduated in 2014. Almo graduated his program in 2012 and Robert graduated from his program in 2010. With the exception of Robert, who is 51-59 years old, all other participants are 21-29 years old.

All participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx in the online demographic survey. Even though the researcher did not inquire about each participant's cultural or ethnic identity, during the course of their interviews some participants referred to themselves as Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Latinx, and Afro-Latino. Christi reported the most Hispanic/Latinx cultural representation in her program from start to finish: two of her four instructors were Hispanic/Latinx and all of her classmates, except one, were Hispanic/Latinx. Alex reported that none of her instructors were Hispanic/Latinx and even though she had two classmates who identified as Hispanic/Latinx at the beginning of the program, she was the only Hispanic/Latinx student who remained and completed the program from that cohort. Robert and Israel experienced similar demographics during their respective programs. Each reported no Hispanic/Latinx instructors and just a few fellow classmates who were Hispanic/Latinx. Robert's cohort had 3 total Hispanic/Latinx students and Israel's cohort had 4 Hispanic/Latinx students. Carlos stated he only had one Hispanic/Latinx instructor and about "30-35%" of his classmates were Hispanic/Latinx. Almo attended two IEPs in Texas and had strong Hispanic/Latinx cultural representation at his first IEP. Four of the five instructors were Hispanic/Latinx and "almost all" of at his classmates were Hispanic/Latinx. He transferred and graduated from a different IEP

⁷ All names used are pseudonyms chosen by each participant.

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where none of his instructors were Hispanic/Latinx instructors and “30-40%” of his classmates were Hispanic/Latinx. Alex, Carlos, Christi, and Israel shared their native language was Spanish.

Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed in its entirety by the researcher. Each interview transcript was printed, and I read each interview several times, making note of possible emergent themes within each interview. After the first round of reading each interview transcript, I identified 33 emergent themes across the six interviews. From there, pertinent quotes were labeled with a tentative thematic category and input to an Excel spreadsheet for comparison to all other interviews. Upon further examination, some themes only appeared in one interview and those were ruled out. After studying the remaining emergent themes, nine notable themes became apparent, fitting into three overarching categories: personal pride, cultural disconnects, and advantages of cultural awareness. Each overarching theme included three sub-themes. I studied all the quotes under each of the nine notable themes and selected the most salient quotes to elucidate the lived experiences of the six participants.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This study investigated the lived experiences of six self-identified Hispanic/Latinx graduates of two-year ASL-English IEPs in Texas. This chapter presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews. Results suggest three overarching themes: pride, cultural disconnects, and cultural advantages. Themes were identified by frequency of appearance within interviews. The three main themes were raised by all participants in the study at least once. Sub-themes were raised with some frequency by participants indicating the following:

Table 1

Number of participants who addressed each emerging theme and sub-theme within this study

Theme	Sub-Theme	Number of Participants N = 6	Percent of Participants
<u><i>Personal Pride</i></u>		<u>6</u>	<u>100%</u>
	Cultural Pride and Motivation	2	33%
	Pride in Language Acquisition	3	50%
	Pride in Program Achievements	5	83%
<u><i>Cultural Disconnects</i></u>		<u>6</u>	<u>100%</u>
	Lack of Multicultural Representation	5	83%
	Lack of Shared Experience	6	100%
	Unable to Utilize First Language	2	33%
<u><i>Advantages of Cultural Awareness</i></u>		<u>6</u>	<u>100%</u>
	Hispanic/Latinx Culture Relative to Deaf Culture	4	67%
	Familiarity with Hispanic/Latinx Culture	2	33%
	Shared Background and Experiences	4	67%

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As indicated in Table 1 (see above), the sub-themes for personal pride included cultural pride and motivation, pride in language acquisition, and pride in program achievements. The sub-themes for cultural disconnects included a lack of multicultural representation, a lack of shared experiences, and the inability to utilize the participant's first language during their IEP. The final overarching theme, advantages of cultural awareness, incorporated the three sub-themes: Hispanic/Latinx culture relating to deaf cultures, familiarity with Hispanic/Latinx culture, and common backgrounds or experiences.

Personal Pride

Each of the six participants mentioned a sense of pride during their IEP or as a result of their IEP. The pride stemmed from varied reasons for each participant and occurred throughout different experiences in their programs. For one participant, it was a specific class that elicited pride, while another participant recalled two specific assignments during her IEP that prompted her pride. For others, the pride was a result of the immersion in ASL. Also, several participants expressed pride in their background knowledge of Spanish and ability to use it to their advantage.

Cultural pride and motivation. Christi recalled two different interpreting assignments from her IEP which led her to feeling proud of her Latina culture. One assignment was given to students to ask their elders for sayings or expressions that are native to their culture. In Spanish, Christi's first language, these are called *dichos*. She clearly remembered a couple of the *dichos* she took to class for interpretation and noted, "...that was a fun day and it made us appreciate our backgrounds a little more." She also appreciated that her family was involved in that assignment. The other assignment she recalled vividly was when an instructor challenged the students to interpret Spanish songs into ASL. She stated, "I got to interpret a corrido into ASL

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and that was really fun. So I felt really, it made me really proud that, wow, this is my culture, this is what I can do.” The assignment broadened her scope of the work she thought she was capable of, and that in turn was a source of pride.

Carlos explained about one specific class he was excited to be able to take during his IEP because it had not been offered for a number of semesters previously. The make-up of the students in class was 95% Hispanic/Latinx, with several different Hispanic/Latinx cultures represented. He mentioned that was the first time he was really able to learn what it meant to be Hispanic/Latinx, and at the same time, it was, “the first time I felt like white people had open ears and were listening to – our platform, basically.” He credits that class with more knowledge of other Hispanic/Latinx cultures and other dialects of Spanish, as well. It was during this class, his Hispanic/Latinx identity truly emerged:

I knew what identity was, but I didn’t know that I had an identity until the last part of my program...and I didn’t know that was something to be proud of. I didn’t know what all that entailed, and it wasn’t until that time that I really got an appreciation for that I was taught...my culture and everything that is involved in my culture, and where I really start to have a sense of pride about not only myself, but other people who looked like me.

Carlos mentioned pride several times during his interview and each time noted how his feelings of pride were not merely a positive factor for himself but were also opportunities to keep him motivated to improve. He stated, “I feel like me, as a Hispanic/Latinx person, anything I do – is not for me. It’s so that I can bring a sense of pride home. It’s something that my Hispanic/Latinx brothers and sisters can be proud of.” This quote from Carlos indicated his personal sense of pride extends beyond his immediate family to encompass Hispanic/Latinx peers on a larger scale.

Pride in language acquisition. All three participants who discussed pride in their acquisition of ASL and expansion of English knowledge, Alex, Carlos, and Israel, are native

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Spanish speakers. Early in her ASL classes, Alex noted the grammatical structure of ASL seemed similar to her native language, Spanish. She observed, “Some people struggled learning the structure and to me it just came like second nature. I felt really proud because I was able to get it before everybody else.” She was able to use her knowledge of Spanish when learning the language, then later when learning to interpret between English and ASL. Israel also noted the similarities in the structures of ASL and Spanish and affirmed he felt he “had a certain advantage” over those students who struggled in ASL classes. “It made me feel a little better about myself in that way,” he recalled. He remembers non-Hispanic students not always making sense of the ASL in class even when he understood it easily. Carlos’ native language enabled him to “kind of take it easy” in a class focused specifically on dissecting complex English words to figure out the meanings. According to him, many of those words were comprised of Latin roots and because Spanish was his first language, he was proud to have had the background in Spanish that allowed him to excel in that class. This harkens back to Gertz & Boudreault (2016) who noted that people who are bilingual are prepared to become multilingual since the experience of learning a second language prepares them for learning a third language.

Pride in program achievements. Carlos and Israel shared similar experiences with regard to accomplishments achieved during their respective IEPs. Each of them felt pride with regard to an individual accomplishment during his IEP, then felt push-back from at least one instructor in each of their respective programs. Carlos recalled:

I achieved some goals early on in my career as a student and because of that I feel like that hindered me because I wanted to celebrate the accomplishments that I had, because in the Latino community, pride is something that we emphasize – but I was made to feel like that wasn’t really seen as something to celebrate. I feel like it was seen more like, ‘You’re getting too big for your britches, you need to slow down.’

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He was unaware of the reasons, and therefore could not articulate why, the support from his IEP instructors and peers diminished near the end of his IEP journey; he mentioned several times during his interview how supported he did feel almost the entire way through his classes. Even though he did feel some push-back regarding his accomplishment, overall, he did not allow the negativity to minimize his sense of pride in his early accomplishments.

Even though Israel did not indicate a specific incident, near the end of his interview, when asked if he wanted to share anything else about his IEP experience, he noted:

This started happening I guess towards the mid-program until the end-ish – that we're much more ready, interpreting-wise from English to ASL...and I felt like, a little bit, that I was being, I guess, dragged a little bit down, to not, I guess, excel to my full potential. I think-I don't like to say that because older interpreters, well interpreters tend to, you've heard of the expression that interpreters tend to eat their young. But I don't know, I guess maybe there could have been some jealousy in there? But I didn't want to look into the situation too much to where I just started to think about it all the time but there may have been something there along those lines.

Israel's choice of vocabulary when describing this recollection gave the impression that the action or actions did not overtake his thoughts during the second half of his IEP; however, since he chose to mention it, it suggests it did have a positive impact on his pride of being able to interpret well from English to ASL. Even though they both experienced resistance to at least one personal accomplishment during the time in their IEPs, they both still experienced pride and chose to share that part of their stories.

When wrapping up his interview, Almo expressed both motivation and a sense of pride as a result of the struggles involved in being part of a cultural and linguistic minority:

That's the biggest takeaway is even when you have unique challenges, sometimes that's an advantage because when you really have to work for something, although at times it can be discouraging, or it can seem overwhelming, I think that when you have to fight through barriers, at the end of the day that makes you a stronger individual as a person. Sometimes having that struggle in the [IEP] can help prepare you for that in the professional world. And though ideally, in a

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perfect world, everything would be the same. We don't live in one of those, and you have to look at the struggles as positives, as advantages - like, I had to go through this and as a result, I'm a really hard worker.

Almo's perspective seems to indicate he maintained a growth mindset during his IEPs.

As Claro, Paunesku, and Dweck (2016) explain, students who possess a growth mindset see difficult tasks as a way to increase their abilities and seek out challenges and learning experiences that would enable them to do so.

Christi recalled completing her IEP and said, "I feel I was proud to be in a group of such strong Latina women, and that we graduated together despite all our struggles. I really appreciate that we were able to make it through together." Although Christi's cohort was all Latinas, except for one student, she still experienced some set-backs. Even though it took three years to finish her two-year program while working full time and raising a child (the only participant who mentioned having children), the pride emanating from her was evident during her interview.

Robert also noted his instructors were able to distinguish very quickly that he was a serious student, he had skill, and he excelled in his program. Robert summed up his experience by stating:

The fact that I was smart enough, I guess, to recognize that this is the time for me to continue my studies in the field has impacted me in a very positive way and I see great results evolving from the program. I've been a mentor. I've been an instructor in an [IEP]. I try to be helpful to others and say - well maybe if you look at it this way from this perspective. I just can't say enough positive things about my experience.

During their interview, each participant described a type of motivation or pride he or she felt during their years as an ASL-English interpreting student. It is evident some of those feelings extended past their interpreting programs and continue to have an effect; however, all participants also pointed out some aspects of their programs they believed required improvements.

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Cultural Disconnects

Even though all participants interviewed provided an overall positive look into their time during their IEP, some themes related to differing cultural backgrounds, native language, and lack of different cultural backgrounds emerged. All six participants recounted various times during their IEPs when they noticed that not everyone had a grasp of their cultures, backgrounds, and languages. Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) stated ethnic identity most often seems to be a frame in which individuals consciously or unconsciously identify with others with whom they feel a common bond because of similar traditions, behaviors, beliefs, or values. Unfortunately, not all participants who took part in this exploratory research study seemed to benefit from their cultural identity while enrolled in their respective programs.

During the survey phase of data collection, each participant acknowledged they identified as Hispanic/Latinx. During the interview portion, participants also referred to themselves as Afro-Latino (Almo), Hispanic (Carlos, Christi, Israel, and Robert), Latino (Carlos), and Latina (Christi). Alex was the only participant who did not name her cultural identity during the course of her interview. Regardless of the specific word or words used to describe their backgrounds, all participants did note experiences that resulted from a lack of shared experiences, lack of multicultural representation, or inability to make use of their native language in their IEPs. Most, but not all, of the experiences were related to cultural and ethnic context.

Lack of multicultural representation. Five of the six participants made remarks suggesting a more culturally diverse curriculum with a more diverse population of instructors, as Mooney's (2000) data from the NMIP also suggested. Nakahara (2016) and West Oyedele (2015) found that signed language interpreters from Asian American/Pacific Islander and

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African American/Black backgrounds, respectively, recommended instruction in IEPs from persons of various racial and cultural identities.

Almo appreciated one particular instructor from his first IEP who had traveled the world while in the military and had been exposed to several languages and cultures from all over the globe. He said:

If you have lived in one place your whole life and you've never ventured outside your comfort zone, that limits your understanding, that limits your exposure to other cultures, your exposure to other people and again the life experiences. So if you don't have those experiences, it's hard for you to teach someone or explain something to someone else related to that. That's a big impact.

Carlos and Robert made statements validating the importance of multicultural representation in IEPs because the world's population is incredibly diverse, including the deaf community as well. Cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, and representation were all topics they touched on during their interviews. Alex and Christi brought up the need for instructors to not stick to just one or a couple cultural variations in their instruction. Alex supported more diversity in order to "find easier ways to get [information] across to each individual student." During her IEP, Christi was interested in learning more outside of the Catholic/Christian culture, but stated:

I don't think that we had the chance to touch on anything outside of that because it's assumed that we're all Hispanic, that we're Catholic. Don't assume that just because I'm a Catholic, Hispanic woman that I'm not going to want to know about interpreting a reading from the Quran or the Torah. I think that should have been discussed further. I feel we're getting less and less prepared for the realities of the world sometimes.

It was interesting to note that these Hispanic/Latinx students did not merely point out their wish for more Hispanic/Latinx cultural representation in their programs, but increased multicultural representation from other cultures and backgrounds as well.

Lack of Shared Experience. Carlos, Israel, and Robert all made statements concerning their desire to have had instructors or mentors in their IEPs who shared their background and

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culture. Carlos was the only participant of the three who had a Hispanic/Latinx instructor, and she was female. Carlos discussed mentors and noted:

I wish there were more people who looked like me when I was a student. Looking back, I can only think of, I think, two males, maybe three, but either they were all too busy for me or they just didn't want to take the time, they were too invested in themselves.

When asked about aspects of their IEP that they would change, both Israel and Robert made comments specific to wanting a Hispanic interpreting instructor with trilingual interpreting experience to benefit all students to be more knowledgeable and well-rounded.

Alex, Robert, and Christi made statements concerning the lack of shared experiences and backgrounds with their instructors. Neither Alex nor Robert had any instructors in their IEPs who identified as Hispanic/Latinx. Alex stated:

One disadvantage was not having a professor of the same cultural background because if I didn't understand something and tried to get more information relatable to me, I didn't have anyone to ask who came from the same cultural background as I did.

Robert expressed that he had a wonderful and overall positive experience during his time in his IEP even though he did not have anyone teaching in his program that “looked like me, who had a common frame of reference, a common cultural and linguistic background.” When asked why he thought there were no Hispanic/Latinx instructors in his program, he replied:

This is ten years ago – I'm thinking the number of interpreters at the [BEI] Advanced or above level, or with national certification and the educational background to be able to teach was missing. I think that has changed. For example, in the program that I graduated from, they now have a Hispanic female, who is also trilingual certified, who teaches in that program and she has been working there for a few years now.

His comment regarding the need for educational background ties into Alfonso's (2006) statement that at least 70% of Hispanics prefer pursuing associate degrees. In order to work at an institute of higher education, like an IEP, one would need more than an associate's degree.

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Christi recounted one vivid memory from her time enrolled in her IEP in which one of her non-Hispanic/Latinx instructors lectured her for speaking up to a salesperson in defense of her grandmother. Christi took her grandmother to get her ears pierced. When the salesperson asked Christi's grandmother for her passport photo instead of a picture ID, Christi became angry with the salesperson and asked why she assumed her grandmother did not have an ID, only a passport. Later at school when retelling the story to her instructor and classmates, the instructor told Christi she "shouldn't have said anything, and you embarrassed your grandmother." Christi went on to say, "this professor didn't understand what it means to be insulted in that way because they've never had their citizenship status questioned like that." This lack of a shared experience led to what Sue (2010) would refer to as a microaggression. Sue's (2010) defined microaggressions as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership" (p. 24). Microaggressions can be overt or covert, but are most damaging when they occur outside the conscious awareness of the well-intended perpetrator (Sue, 2010). In Christi's example, her instructor was worried about Christi's grandmother and did not realize they were inadvertently oppressing Christi and her grandmother's Hispanic/Latinx heritage by ignoring Christi's initial complaint. If Christi has shared that same story with one of her Hispanic/Latinx instructors present instead, the outcome may have been more sympathetic and less chastising.

Unable to utilize first language. Alex and Israel, both native Spanish speakers, expressed feeling secluded, uncomfortable, and more challenged as a result of not being able to ask instructors questions in their native language when the meaning was unclear in English or ASL. Alex mentioned she feels more comfortable hearing explanations in Spanish, and she was not able to have that in her program from the instructors or

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classmates. Israel expressed frustration with sign-to-voice class because essentially he was working from his 'C' language (ASL), processing in his 'A' language (Spanish), and expected to produce his 'B' language (English) at the same speed as his classmates whose 'A' language was English. He emphasized that he could understand the ASL, however, it took a bit more time to retrieve the grammatically correct interpretation in his 'B' language. Although Israel did not explain his level of mastery of English, Razfar and Simon (2011) found that many Latino community college students begin their college education as English Language Learners who are still mastering the fundamental concepts of the English language. This could have had an impact for the four participants who noted Spanish was their first language. Since there were no trilingual programs at their IEPs, Alex and Israel were not able to make use of their native Spanish skills to work from ASL to Spanish or Spanish to ASL. Christi did have the experience of interpreting Spanish and ASL together, however that was not part of the actual curriculum for her IEP, just a variation her instructors would employ at times. It should be noted that none of the IEPs where the six participants attended offered certification or a specialization in trilingual interpreting.

Advantages of Cultural Awareness

Just as a lack of shared backgrounds and experiences can drive wedges between people or groups of people, common backgrounds and experiences can bring people together and help people understand each other more easily. Participants shared ways in which they were able to apply their own backgrounds as Hispanic/Latinx individuals and use that to their advantage in their IEP language and culture classrooms.

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Hispanic/Latinx culture relative to deaf culture. As they were learning ASL and the process of interpreting, several of the participants noted similarities between their own cultures and the culture of the deaf group at large. Alex explained the deaf community in her town felt like what she was already used to with her family because the deaf group would gather together frequently and seemed close and family-oriented. She noted how natural that felt for her during her time as a student. When asked about which part of his IEP he appreciated the most, Israel said connecting with the deaf ASL professors was enjoyable since they shared experiences as members of marginalized groups. He added:

There were times when we would just talk about life in general and how even though they weren't exactly the same struggles, similar challenges popped up when it came to language - trying to go from ASL to English or from Spanish to English, we knew what those frustrations were. So that, in a way, gave my instructors more of a chance to be a little more relatable with the students.

Almo and Carlos also observed that both groups, Hispanic/Latinx and deaf, are oppressed minority groups. While they are not oppressed by majority cultures in the same ways, the results of that oppression can manifest in similar ways. As an Afro-Latino, Almo stated:

The idea of oppression is not foreign to me, so although I'm not deaf, it's easier for me to relate to them because I understand what that looks like and feels like. I think that's a big advantage, just relating to deaf people and understanding deaf people proudly identifying as 'deaf.' Some of my peers struggled with that identity perspective and took a bit longer to fully grasp it.

Carlos expressed satisfaction at being in a program where his education prepared him "to defend another minority group," he would eventually be working with.

Familiarity with Hispanic/Latinx culture. Christi had four instructors teaching in her IEP. Two of them were Hispanic/Latinx. The two instructors who were not Hispanic/Latinx were raised locally, so even though they were not of the same cultural background, she felt they had been in the town long enough to understand "basic, fundamental things" about Hispanic/Latinx

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culture. None of Israel's instructors were Hispanic/Latinx; however, he recalled that one of his instructors used to live in [a predominately Hispanic/Latinx community] before moving to work at that IEP. The instructor was sensitive about the culture, but language-wise it was a bit different as she knew parts of the culture, so he could relate to her some in that aspect. Those examples suggest even if a person is not a part of a certain cultural group, their knowledge of varied cultural groups can still make a positive impact.

Shared Background and Experiences. Almost all participants expressed constructive experiences with instructors or classmates who shared similar experiences or backgrounds. Carlos only had one Hispanic/Latinx IEP instructor and he recalled he “didn't realize how much of a special relationship that was until the end of my program.” He already valued that instructor/mentor for different reasons, even more so when they finally related on a cultural level. Christi shared that her IEP experience was enriched because many of her instructors and mentors were Hispanic/Latinx and also spoke Spanish. Sometimes it was easier for her to communicate with them in Spanish regarding specific terminology. Also, her Latina mentors would teach “appropriate cultural expansions and appropriate sign-to-voice interpreting.” These examples seem to echo statements from Brooks et al. (2012) that instructors from the minority groups to go past the set curriculum content to include cultural and linguistic experiences for their students. Also, the results from the study by Hagedorn et al. (2007) noted that the presence of Latinos in the faculty representation fostered a sense of belonging, lead to more social integration on campus, and provided an overall level of comfort for students which encouraged success. Their research also indicated that as the numbers of Latino students and faculty on community college campuses increased to a critical mass, student academic success increased as well.

Israel also used Spanish in his IEP, but with his Spanish speaking classmates. He said:

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I felt that I was able to relate more with them and at times we even decompressed, you know? We were able to talk more in depth about our struggles... what we faced in the interpreting courses and it was more open. I didn't feel as intimidated, I guess you could say, because there was some stuff that I didn't know how to interpret, whether it was from ASL to English or English to ASL, and talking with them was more of a relief.

Almo believed there were benefits of having classmates who have similar life experiences like establishing rapport quickly and understanding shared experiences without necessarily having to explain or justify. He referred to “the struggle” and the idea that there are certain things you can presume people will “just kind of understand” because of shared background and cultures. When asked about any disadvantages she felt during her program, Christi replied, “I don't think I was at a disadvantage since the majority of us were of the same cultural affiliation and I felt very supported.” She shared feeling substantial support because her entire graduating class was comprised of Latinas who all grew up in the same community and experienced the same struggles of going to school full-time, working full-time, and interning full-time. Christi's experience was unique in that the majority of her classmates were of Hispanic/Latinx origin. None of the other participants were in a similar situation.

Summary

Alex, Almo, Carlos, Christi, Israel, and Robert graduated from their respective IEPs in Texas within a span of seven years—2010 to 2016—and even though they had varied experiences, common threads ran through each story. All spoke of experiencing personal pride, cultural disconnects, and advantages of cultural awareness while enrolled in their IEPs.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Limitations

There are several recognized limitations to this research. First and foremost, the study is exploratory and qualitative. It is not meant to serve as a generalization since findings were gathered from only six participants who chose to share their stories. Research and knowledge from related studies of practicing African American/Black interpreters (West Oyedele, 2015) and Asian American/Pacific Islander interpreters (Nakahara, 2016) were used to inform the research questions and interviews for this study. However, the lack of available research on interpreting students of color provided a starting point to explore the data from this project for themes.

Another limitation is the region set for the study. The research focused on graduates of associate-granting IEPs in Texas only. Potential respondents who graduated from an associate-granting program in the other forty-nine states were excluded. Also, graduates of bachelor-granting IEPs were excluded from this study, and Texas does have one university that offers a bachelor degree in ASL-English interpreting. This university was excluded because it was the only bachelor-granting IEP in the state. The years of graduation could be a limitation since the graduates were asked to recall information about how they felt during their programs several years ago. Participants graduated in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016. As time has passed, participants may have remembered phenomena differently now than how they felt during their actual time enrolled in their IEP. Since the research is phenomenological in nature and asked the participants to reflect on their time during their IEPs, their experiences are filtered through their personal lenses that may have been impacted by events that have happened since their time in their IEPs.

The topic, research question, and interview questions, were all based on my experience as a Hispanic/Latinx graduate of an associate-granting IEP in Texas, as an interpreter practitioner,

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and as an adjunct instructor at an associate-granting IEP in Texas. Emergent themes from each participant's quotes were labeled by the researcher using descriptive phenomenology as the theoretical framework. Phenomenological interviews leave the interpretation of data to the discretion of the researcher. To minimize bias, direct quotes from participants were used as often as possible rather than presenting paraphrases. This allows the reader to compare the researcher's understanding of the participants' comments with their own (Stringer, 2014).

Future Research

A multitude of opportunities exist for further research on the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx graduates of IEPs. This exploratory study found three overarching themes among six Hispanic/Latinx graduates of associate-granting IEPs. Each of these overarching themes could be explored through more interviews of IEP graduates, or even current students enrolled in IEPs. The participant pool could be expanded to include the entire U.S.. Also, current students and graduates from bachelor-granting IEPs could be interviewed and their responses analyzed, explored, and compared to students and graduates from associate-granting IEPs. Most importantly, this type of research can be conducted on students and graduates of IEPs who are from other various minority cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to gain their perspectives to provide insight to program directors and instructors of IEPs. The information garnered could prove useful to enable IEPs to become more culturally and linguistically sensitive to their students and perhaps foster growth of a more diverse pool of future ASL-English sign language interpreters to serve the multifaceted deaf communities that employ their services.

Conclusion

This pilot research study creates a starting point for research regarding the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx students who have graduated from an associate-granting IEP in

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Texas. The six Hispanic/Latinx respondents interviewed, two female and four male participants, graduated from their respective IEP across a seven-year span, from 2010 to 2016. The interviews conducted showed three overarching themes regarding their lived experiences: personal pride, cultural disconnects, and advantages of cultural awareness.

The experiences presented throughout the findings from the data reflect the importance of cultural representation and cultural awareness to these Hispanic/Latinx IEP graduates. The first theme, personal pride, included stories from participants which showed cultural pride and motivation, pride in their linguistic acquisition, and pride in their program achievements. The second theme, cultural disconnects, resulted from the participants' stories of interactions with instructors and classmates which suggested a lack of multicultural representation in the demographics of the program and the curriculums, a lack of shared experiences, and the inability to utilize their first language, Spanish, effectively within the program. Under the final overarching theme, advantages of cultural awareness, participants recounted instances in their programs when they could relate deaf cultures to their own Hispanic/Latinx cultures, they had instructors who had familiarity with Hispanic/Latinx cultures (even if they were not Hispanic/Latinx themselves), and they shared backgrounds and experiences with their instructors and fellow classmates which helped forge bonds during their time enrolled in their IEPs.

Summary

This research was an initial exploration into the lived experiences of self-identified Hispanic/Latinx graduates of associate degree-granting IEPs in Texas from 2010 to 2016. Research on various aspects of ASL-English sign language interpreting has been conducted, including best practices for educating interpreters, gaps in interpreting programs, trilingual interpreting (ASL, Spanish, and English) and experiences of some interpreting practitioners from

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cultural minority groups. This research is one of the first explorations into the experiences of Hispanic/Latinx graduates that does not require the participant to work as a trilingual interpreter.

There is still much to explore regarding the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx graduates of IEPs. The themes found in this study suggested that while students felt personal pride, cultural disconnects, and advantages of cultural awareness during their IEPs, they experienced them in various ways. As more research is conducted, we can create a larger picture of the emerging themes of lived experiences of IEP students and graduates. Then, with that knowledge and understanding, IEPs can work to improve curriculum to be representative of the various cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students, and in turn, the multicultural and intersectional deaf communities they strive to serve.

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**Appendix A
Recruitment Flyer**

GET INVOLVED

HISPANIC/LATINA/LATINO PARTICIPANTS WANTED!

Kristina Flores Arellano, a graduate student attending St. Catherine University, is gathering information about the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx graduates from two-year, American Sign Language/English Interpreter Education Programs in Texas.

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT

If you are 18 or over and graduated with an Associate of Applied Science degree from a two-year ASL/English Interpreter Education Program in Texas from 2009 – 2018 and identify as Hispanic/Latinx, you can take part.

COMPLETE AN ONLINE SURVEY, THEN INDICATE IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP, ONLINE INTERVIEW

Sharing your experience through the online survey will take no more than 10-15 minutes of your time. Participants willing to engage in an online interview may be contacted for involvement. The interview will take no more than one hour of your time.

Your contributions may enable Interpreter Education Programs to improve their understanding of the student experience in order to better serve the needs of Hispanic/Latinx students enrolled in those programs now and in the future.

Take part or share:

http://stkate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2raYlbe5NigeJgh



**ST. CATHERINE
UNIVERSITY**

Approved by St. Catherine University
IRB No. 1182

Kristina Flores Arellano -- kaarellano@stkate.edu

Appendix B

Informed Consent and Online Survey

Survey of Lived Experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Graduates of ASL/English IEPs in Texas

Start of Block: Welcome to the research study!

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q1

My name is Kristina Flores Arellano and I am a graduate student working toward a Master of Arts degree in Interpretation Studies and Communication Equity from St. Catherine University.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study exploring the lived experiences of students who identify as Hispanic/Latinx and that graduated with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in an American Sign Language(ASL)/English Interpreter Education Program (IEP) from a college in Texas. You will be asked to answer some questions about your time enrolled in your IEP. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The study should take you around 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. Some participants may qualify for potential involvement in the second part of this study, a one-on-one online interview, based on demographic answers provided during this online survey.

Not all participants will meet the criteria for involvement in the interview portion of this study. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Kristina Arellano at kaarellano@stkate.edu.

You may choose not to answer or opt out of the survey before or during data collection without consequence. There are no significant risks associated with this survey. Participation in this survey will add to the body of knowledge in the field of sign language interpreting education and increase understanding of the lived experiences of students who graduated from an ASL/English Interpreter Education Program in Texas.

This research is taking place under the supervision of Dr. Erica Alley, MAISCE Program Director (elalley@stkate.edu) and Dr. Naomi Sheneman, and has been approved by the Institutional Review Board. Please contact me or my advisors with any inquiries.

There are no direct benefits to participants of this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

Thank you for your participation,
Kristina Flores Arellano

I encourage you to share this link with anyone that meets the eligibility:
http://stkate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2raYlbe5NigeJgh *By selecting “I consent, meet the criteria, and wish begin the study,” you assure you are **18 years of age or older and graduated with an Associate of Applied Science degree from an Interpreter Education Program (IEP) in Texas from 2009 to 2018 and identify as Hispanic/Latinx.**

- I consent, meet the criteria, and wish begin the study (1)
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate (2)

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Skip To: End of Block If My name is Kristina Flores Arellano and I am a graduate student working toward a Master of Arts d... = I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Page Break

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q2 Where did you earn your Associate of Applied Science degree in ASL/English interpretation?

- Austin Community College (1)
- Collin College Spring Creek Campus (2)
- Del Mar College (3)
- El Paso Community College (4)
- Houston Community College (5)
- Lone Star College - Cy-Fair (6)
- Lone Star College - North Harris (7)
- McLennan Community College (8)
- San Antonio College (9)
- South Texas College (10)
- Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf (11)
- Tarrant County College - Trinity River Campus (12)
- Tyler Junior College (13)
- None of the Above (14)

Skip To: End of Block If Where did you earn your Associate of Applied Science degree in ASL/English interpretation? = None of the Above

Q3 What year did you graduate with an Associate of Applied Science in ASL/English interpretation from a Texas college?

- 2009 (7)
- 2010 (8)
- 2011 (9)
- 2012 (10)
- 2013 (11)
- 2014 (1)
- 2015 (2)
- 2016 (3)
- 2017 (4)
- 2018 (5)
- None of the Above (6)

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Skip To: End of Block If What year did you graduate with an Associate of Applied Science in ASL/English interpretation fro... = None of the Above

Q4 If you attended more than one IEP in Texas, please select all that apply.

- I only attended one IEP in Texas (1)
 - Austin Community College (2)
 - Collin College Spring Creek Campus (3)
 - Del Mar College (4)
 - El Paso Community College (5)
 - Houston Community College (6)
 - Lone Star College - Cy-Fair (7)
 - Lone Star College - North Harris (8)
 - McLennan Community College (9)
 - San Antonio College (10)
 - South Texas College (11)
 - Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf (12)
 - Tarrant County College - Trinity River Campus (13)
 - Tyler Junior College (14)
-

Q5 If you attended one or more IEPs outside of Texas before graduating with your Associate of Applied Science, please enter the college name(s) below.

Q6 During your interpreter education, how easily did you establish close relationships with your classmates?

- Not at all easily (1)
- Slightly easily (2)
- Moderately easily (3)
- Quite easily (4)
- Extremely easily (5)

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q7 To what extent have you maintained close relationships with your classmates?

- Not at all well maintained (1)
 - Slightly well maintained (2)
 - Moderately well maintained (3)
 - Quite well maintained (4)
 - Extremely well maintained (5)
-

Q8 During your education, how much time was spent discussing interpersonal relationships among potential colleagues?

- None at all (1)
 - A little (2)
 - A moderate amount (3)
 - A lot (4)
 - A great deal (5)
-

Q9 How self-aware would you say your educators were in being able to recognize their own biases and their impact(s) on your training?

- Not at all self-aware (1)
 - Slightly self-aware (2)
 - Moderately self-aware (3)
 - Very self-aware (4)
 - Extremely self-aware (5)
-

Page Break

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q10 When answering the following question, please consider your IEP experience in the classroom only.

	How well do you feel your interpreter education program educated you about the following topics?				
	Not at all well (1)	Slightly well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Very well (4)	Extremely well (5)
Business Practices (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Code of Professional Conduct (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continuing Education (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiculturalism (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power & Privilege (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-Care (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soft Skills (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Specialized Areas of Interpreting (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Interpreting (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with diverse d/Deaf communities (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q11 How many guest speakers that came to present in your program were of the same cultural affiliation(s) as you?

- My program did not have guest speakers (1)
 - None (2)
 - 1-3 (3)
 - 4-6 (4)
 - More than 6 (5)
-

Q12 How many of your educators were of the same cultural affiliation(s) as you?

- None (1)
 - 1-3 (2)
 - 4-6 (3)
 - More than 6 (4)
-

Q13 If your program included formal mentoring, how many of the mentors were of the same cultural affiliation(s) as you?

- My program did not have formal mentoring (1)
 - None (2)
 - 1-3 (3)
 - 4-6 (4)
 - More than 6 (5)
-

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Q14 Did you frequently consider discontinuing your interpreter education?

- Not at all frequently (1)
 - Slightly frequently (2)
 - Moderately frequently (3)
 - Very frequently (4)
 - Extremely frequently (5)
-

Q15 How well do you feel your interpreter education program prepared you to work as an ASL/English interpreter?

- Not at all well (1)
 - Slightly well (2)
 - Moderately well (3)
 - Very well (4)
 - Extremely well (5)
-

Page Break

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q16 Please indicate your current age.

- 18-20 (1)
 - 21-29 (2)
 - 30-39 (3)
 - 40-49 (4)
 - 50-59 (5)
 - 60 or above (6)
-

Q17 What is your gender identity?

- Female (1)
 - Male (2)
 - Non-binary (3)
 - Transgender Female (4)
 - Transgender Male (8)
 - Prefer not to answer (5)
 - Other, please indicate: (7) _____
-

Q18 How do you identify?

- Deaf (1)
 - Hard of Hearing (2)
 - Hearing (3)
 - Other, please indicate: (4) _____
-

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q19 What is your ethnicity? Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
 - Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (2)
 - Black or African-American (3)
 - Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx (4)
 - White/Caucasian (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - Unknown (7)
 - Other (8) _____
-

Q20 Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx? = No

Display This Question:

If Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx? = Yes

Q21 Are you interested in being contacted for participation in a follow up interview? The online interview will take no more than one hour of your time.

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Are you interested in being contacted for participation in a follow up interview? The online inte... = Yes

HISPANIC/LATINX IEP STUDENTS

Q22 Do you have access to a computer or laptop with a web camera and microphone in a private space to participate in an online, one-on-one interview?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Welcome to the research study!

Appendix C
Informed Consent for Online Interview

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Research Study - Online Interview

Study Title: An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Graduates with an Associate of Applied Science Degree from Interpreter Education Programs in Texas

Researcher: Kristina Flores Arellano, Graduate Student, St. Catherine University, Master of Arts, Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE)

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called “An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Graduates with an Associate of Applied Science Degree from Interpreter Education Programs in Texas.” The study is being done by Kristina Flores Arellano, a Masters’ student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. The faculty advisors for this study are Erica Alley, Ph.D., MAISCE Program Director and Naomi Sheneman, Ph.D., MAISCE Research Advisor.

This study explores the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx students who have graduated from a Texas Interpreter Education Program. There is a gap in research related to Hispanic/Latinx American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpreting students. This study is important because it will contribute to the body of knowledge of Hispanic/Latinx students in ASL/English interpreting programs. Approximately 6 people are expected to participate in the interview portion of this research study. 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 have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You were selected for participation in this study because you self-identified as Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx and graduated from a Texas Interpreter Education Program between 2014 and 2018.

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

Because you meet the criteria and if you decide to participate, you will be asked to do these things:

- Participate in one (1) online, one-on-one interview, which will last no more than 60 minutes and will be video recorded.
- Share about your experiences during your time enrolled in your ASL/English interpreter education program in Texas.

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In total, this study will take no more than 1 hour for the interview session described above.

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

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in the study, your relationship with St. Catherine University will not change in any way. You may withdraw from the study at any time before or during data collection, for any reason and without any penalty.

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

Participants will meet the Principal Investigator (PI), Kristina Flores Arellano, online using a web-based video-conferencing software (such as *Appear.in*, *Zoom*, or *Skype*). The PI will utilize *Snagit*, a screen-recording capture tool, in order to record the complete interview session for the purpose of transcription and analysis. While the video will not be seen by anyone other than the researcher, sharing personal information may cause some discomfort for participants.

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

While there are no direct benefits for participating in this study, the potential impact of awareness of the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latinx students for ASL/English interpreter education programs may be great as there is an absence of research on the experiences of ASL/English interpreting students who identify as Hispanic/Latina/Latino/Latinx.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

Compensation will not be offered for participation in this study.

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

In order to protect your privacy, the names of participants will not be used in the labeling of videos or the transcripts that are created from the video. You may choose your own pseudonym for the interview for the purposes of this study. Your image will not be viewed by anyone other than the researcher. Video files will not be shared in any way in the reporting of the study; only transcription data will be utilized for reporting purposes.

The information that you provide in this study will be video recorded and seen only by the researcher for transcription. Video interviews will be transcribed by the researcher herself. The research data will be kept on a password-protected laptop, and the video files will be encrypted using Windows 10 file encryption. The researcher's faculty advisors will only have access to the transcribed data, not videos. Data analysis will be completed by May 24, 2019. After that, all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you will be destroyed. Video files of online interviews will be deleted within 6 months of the conclusion of the study but no later than December 31, 2022 (four years from the beginning of this study).

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Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified or identifiable in the any written reports or publications.

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

If during the course of this research study there are new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, you will be informed 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 (361) 510-9353 or kaarellano@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Dr. Erica Alley at (651) 690-6018 or 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 video and audio recorded. I have read this informed consent document, all my questions have been answered, and I am aware I may withdraw from this study during the interview.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix D
Videotape Release Form

I, _____, agree to be videotaped as part of my participation in the study “An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Graduates with an Associate of Applied Science Degree from Interpreter Education Programs in Texas” conducted by Kristina Arellano. I understand that the videotape will be labeled using a chosen pseudonym and kept secure on an external hard-drive stored in the researcher’s home. I understand that the video will be kept by the researcher and used for research purposes. The video will not be shown to others without my written permission.

Please read the following and check those for which you give consent. Please note: you cannot participate in the experiment if you are unwilling to be video-recorded.

- Yes, I agree to be videotaped for the purposes of this study.

- Yes, I give permission for my videotape to be used in scholarly presentations and publications.
- No, I do not give permission for my videotape to be used in scholarly presentations and publications.

- Yes, I give my permission to be contacted by e-mail about related, future research.
 - My e-mail address is: _____
- No, I do not give my permission to be contacted by e-mail about related, future research.

Participant’s Signature

Date

Primary Investigator’s Signature

Date

Appendix E
Semi-Structured Interview – Script & Questions

To ensure that all of the participants receive the exact same information, I need to read from this script, O.K.?

First, thank you for your participation in this research study on the lived experiences of self-identified Hispanic/Latinx graduates of interpreter education programs in Texas. Before we begin I want to ask if you have any questions about any of the forms that you recently filled out. Today you will be answering questions about the time you were taking classes in your interpreter education program in Texas. I want you to know that your responses today will be filmed and I will be the only researcher viewing the video for transcription purposes. As you noticed in the forms that you recently completed, I may use some of the information you share in scholarly presentations, I may include sections of the transcript of your responses in scholarly articles or scholarly presentations, and/or I may use sections of the transcript of your responses in future scholarly studies. All references to you will be only by the pseudonym you choose. Demographic information, including your gender and year of graduation, may be shared to describe the source of data generated from your recorded interview. Your school(s) attended will not be shared.

Your participation in this interview should take no more than one hour. If you feel you need a break at any time, please let me know. Ready to begin?

Great! Let's begin.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your experience during your ASL/English interpreting program.
2. How many Hispanic/Latinx students were in your classes?
3. How did the number of Hispanic/Latinx students in your classes impact your experience?
4. How many Hispanic/Latinx instructors taught your classes?
5. How did the number of Hispanic/Latinx instructors in your classes impact your experience?
6. In what ways were Hispanic/Latinx individuals, such as guest speakers or mentors, involved in your program?
7. As a Hispanic/Latinx student, what aspects of the interpreting program did you appreciate?
8. Tell me about a time when you thought your instructor or classmates did not understand your perspective on a particular topic.
9. Tell me about a time you felt you had an advantage in your interpreting program because of your Hispanic/Latinx cultural affiliation(s).
10. Tell me about a time you felt you had a disadvantage in your interpreting program because of your Hispanic/Latinx cultural affiliation(s).
11. Looking back, was there anything you would have changed about your experience?
12. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences as a Hispanic/Latinx interpreting student?

Potential follow-up questions:

1. Please tell me more about that.
2. Why do you think that is?
3. How does that make you feel?

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4. Please share specific examples.