

School Speech-Language Pathologists and their collaboration with interpreters/translators

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Introduction

- Working with interpreters/translators in public schools is vital in California because we have a significant amount of not only Spanish speakers, but second language learners.
- It is important for SLPs to collaborate with these professionals to make sure parents are getting all the information on the services their child needs, and to know their rights as a parent with a child who has communication difficulties.

Background

- Dr. Saenz and her colleague Dr. Henriette Langdon previously conducted a survey on 229 speech-language pathologists in California.
- The researchers wanted to know the experiences and opinions of SLPs who work in the public schools with interpreters/translators.
- They wanted more in-depth information, so Dr. Saenz and Dr. Langdon interviewed 10 SLPs who worked in public schools across the state.
- They asked numerous questions about their experiences and opinions working with the interpreters/translators in their districts.
- Dr. Saenz and her colleague felt this research was important because they thought they may find some common dissatisfaction with some aspects of interpreters/translators.
- There is also very little research in the field of speech-language pathology on collaborating with interpreters/translators in public schools.

Internship Objective

- To evaluate how interpreters/translators are used in public schools by speech-language pathologists and their effectiveness.
- To learn to analyze qualitative data collected using an interview method.
- To gain knowledge about the experiences of speech-language pathologists who work in public schools.

Research Methods

- Researchers selected 10 SLPs that they knew who were able to be interviewed.
- SLPs were audio recorded and interviewed one on one with Dr. Saenz or Dr. Langdon.
- Data was collected by asking open- and closed-ended questions in a structured interview style.
- Qualitative methods for analyzing data are still in progress

Intern Procedures

- For this internship I completed the CITI IRB to receive a certificate to be cleared for research
- I listened to audio files of 4 interviews
- I transcribed the interviews word for word
- Listened to audios to extract information to answer a list of questions on the therapist's experiences and opinions
- Data was analyzed to look for common themes

Themes

- When 4 SLPs were asked who were the most effective interpreters/translators, 3 of the interviewees chose professionals with a speech background (bilingual speech-language pathologist or SLP-A).
- When asked what percentage of the time they worked with interpreters/translators in therapy, all 4 therapists answered none or 0% of the time.
- When asked who was the least effective interpreter/translator, 2 of the 4 said family members who were minors.
- When asked what are the most important characteristics of an interpreter/translator, 3 of the 4 said someone who is familiar with the vocabulary discussed in IEPs (Individual Education Programs).

Conclusions

This research is a step in the right direction because there is not a lot of research on this topic. Dr. Saenz believes there should be further research in the future. Overall, this internship gave me valuable research skills. I feel competent in my transcribing skills which will help me not only in graduate school, but my future career. I learned not only the importance, but how rigorous it is to work with qualitative data.

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