

## FINAL Transcript for Clerc Center Schick video FOR CAPTIONING

ANDREA: Welcome! My name is Andrea Sonnier. Today's webcast is about educational interpreting in K-12 school settings. It is developed and produced by the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. My guest today is Dr. Brenda Schick. First, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I used to teach at a school for the deaf. I'm deaf and grew up in a mainstream program, so I've experienced educational interpreting. Currently I'm a PhD student at Gallaudet University in a program called Critical Studies in the Education of Deaf Learners. I focus on deaf students of color in my research.

Now, Brenda, can you tell us about yourself?

BRENDA: Sure, I'd be happy to. Andrea, I'm also a former teacher of the deaf. I'm also a CODA. I grew up in a Deaf family, and currently I'm a researcher. I study language development and literacy and deaf and hard of hearing students, and also educational interpreting and theory of mind.

BRENDA: Okay, so today we have a pretty big agenda. We're going to be talking about the laws and regulations that provide oversight to educational interpreting. We're going to be talking about the context of educational interpreting, but we're also going to focus on how educators and professionals in the K-12 setting can support the educational interpreter and what they do. And, finally, we're going to be talking about what parents and students need to know about educational interpreting.

I always like to start with the fact that schools are not just about content curriculum. That's a huge, important part about what schools do, but they also have to foster growth in language development, cognition, social-emotional development, and other kinds of things that we consider character qualities.

So, for me, a fundamental premise is that educational interpreters' jobs are quite different from those of community interpreters and we need to acknowledge those differences as well. One of the most important differences is that there is a host of legislation, regulations, policies, and governmental structures that are part of educational interpreting. We have federal regulations, we have state departments of education that are intricately involved in this, and then we have local school districts. So we all know about IDEA '04, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and one of the main points of that is to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students have access to an education in the least restrictive environment. Most of the time, for most students, this involves an Individualized Education Program, or an IEP, that outlines what kinds of accommodations and services a student is supposed to receive. We also are required to educate students in the least restrictive environment, and these days for many deaf and hard of hearing students that means they're in their local public schools with an educational interpreter and there's all sorts of procedural safeguards that ensure that they receive a free and appropriate education. But I think one of the biggest things that a lot of people don't know is that the educational interpreter is actually a related service provider. This is a really formal term, and it means that they are really a member of the educational team. That team is responsible for implementing the student's IEP or 504 plan and monitoring and managing the student's educational process.

ANDREA: I have previous experience developing IEPs for deaf and hard of hearing students. Often I have noticed the term "related service provider." Can you explain what that role is like?

BRENDA: The role of a related service provider is to provide supplemental services that allow the student to access the general education. There's actually quite a few related service providers, such as speech pathologists, audiologists, interpreters, school psychologists, physical and occupational therapy, so all of these professionals come under that header of "related service provider."

ANDREA: Who determines if an educational interpreter is qualified to be a related service provider?

BRENDA: Well, that's a really interesting thing to ask because it is so different than it is for community interpreters. For most states, it's the state department of education that establishes minimum standards for educational interpreters, and they're the ones that monitor whether or not schools are hiring individuals who are actually qualified to do this service. And I should point out that this is the same as teachers and other educational professionals, such as speech pathologists and audiologists. And I think it's important to note that the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, which is a national interpreting organization and it is quite a fine organization, but it has a limited role in determining policy related to educational interpreters and that is really because state departments of education cannot and will not give up their responsibilities to establish those minimum standards.

ANDREA: Do all states have standards for educational interpreters?

BRENDA: Well, the good news is that 42 states have standards for educational interpreters. Most of them use the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, or EIPA, to determine how qualified an interpreter is.

ANDREA: I'm familiar with the EIPA. Can you elaborate about that assessment?

BRENDA: Yeah, I'd be happy to. The EIPA is an evaluation tool to measure and quantify an educational interpreter's signing performance in interpreting and voicing performance in interpreting. Interpreters receive a score from 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest. I should mention states differ in what level of the EIPA they require. There are some states that require a 3.0, which in my opinion is too low. Other states require a 3.5, which I also think is fairly low, and more and more states are starting to adopt a 4.0, which I think is a better qualification.

ANDREA: I've noticed myself, as a former student in Louisiana with educational interpreters, compared to being a student here in D.C. with educational interpreters, they have different skills. Why do you think that is? Why do you think states have different standards for interpreters?

BRENDA: Well, lots of people ask me that question. The real issue is that we would all love to have every educational interpreter have a 5.0 on the EIPA. If I had my dream, that would be it. But that would also mean that a state wouldn't have a very large pool of educational interpreters. It's very challenging to get a 5.0 on the EIPA. Even getting a 4.0 is fairly challenging. So states that I work with always have quite a lengthy discussion on that balance between having an adequate workforce and having standards that are good enough but don't wipe out their workforce. It's always been a challenge for states when they reach that conversation.

ANDREA: You just talked about the standards for educational interpreting. Now people want to know what the difference is between educational interpreting and community interpreting? Can you explain?

BRENDA: Yeah, let's start with the community interpreter. I think one of the major differences is that the community interpreter, especially if they are a member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, are bound to follow the RID/NAD Code of Professional Conduct, and this delineates what an interpreter can and cannot do in various situations. It's sort of like a code of ethics. Now two principles that I think are especially important that we will talk about related to educational interpreters, but for community interpreters they have a principle of autonomy. When you are working with an adult, that adult has a right to be an adult and that may mean that they choose not to understand something, that may mean that they choose not to look, that may mean that they just decide they don't want to learn that information. But that's their right to do as an adult. There is also the issue of confidentiality that is very important. When an interpreter works with a deaf or hard of hearing consumer, they are prohibited from talking about what they learned during that interpreting assignment to other people. That really the deaf or hard of hearing individual owns that confidentiality. They own that information. They have a right to talk about it, but the interpreter does not. So the deaf adult is an adult and has to be treated as one. So this notion of autonomy means that the community interpreter has a limited responsibility to help the deaf consumer understand. The deaf consumer can certainly ask questions that the interpreter can interpret, but if they don't that's not the interpreter's job. They can adjust their interpreting for different situations, but they can't alter the message.

ANDREA: Thank you for explaining about community interpreters. Now how is the role of educational interpreters different?

BRENDA: Well, it is very different, and that's primarily because, as I mentioned before, the federal government and state departments of education define aspects of standards of practice. Those people are working in an educational system and, like all professionals, the governmental agencies regulate those and not an external organization. Speech pathologists aren't organized by ASHA or anything like that. And, as a related service provider, the interpreter is actually a legally defined member of the educational team. That's really important. That's very different than a community interpreter. So they are a member of the educational team, and this means that the educational interpreter must communicate with all of the members of the educational team. It's not an option. And so this notion of confidentiality that's so critically important in community interpreting is quite a different concept in the school because that interpreter must talk with the educational team. I've had some interpreters tell me that they really can't talk with the classroom teacher because of the child's confidentiality, but that's an incorrect notion about how confidentiality works in the school system.

BRENDA: So, Andrea, what about your interpreting situation. I know you've had lots of experience with educational interpreters. For example, were your educational interpreters invited to your IEP meetings?

ANDREA: That's odd, now that I think about it, in all of my IEP meetings, I rarely had an interpreter as a part of the team. I did have one whose role was only to interpret for me. I had parents there and had teachers there, but there was rarely an interpreter there as a member of the educational team, only just there to interpret for me.

BRENDA: Yeah.

ANDREA: I'm wondering ... during my experience in the mainstream program, I had different interpreters throughout the day. I had maybe five different interpreters, and there was an interpreter coordinator. If you say the interpreter needs to be a part of the educational team, would all the interpreters need to be there or just the interpreter coordinator?

BRENDA: Well, you bring up a couple of really interesting points. For the part about the interpreter coordinator, you actually had a pretty good situation. Many schools don't have an interpreter coordinator and there's nobody providing oversight. But in this case, I think that would be important for the interpreter coordinator to bring that information to the IEP team. But you also bring up another good point where you said the interpreter was at the IEP as an interpreter, not as an educational team member. It's very important to distinguish those roles. If an interpreter is at an IEP meeting as a related service provider to provide the team with information, they should not be interpreting. They can, if they are there interpreting for the student, then they should not be providing information to the team as well. It's too impossible to do those dual roles, so both of those points were very, very good.

ANDREA: Thank you for sharing that. Now we have questions from the audience.

BRENDA: Oh, good.

QUESTION 1: "I'm an educational interpreter, but I never get invited to the IEP meetings. The team seems to think that I shouldn't be there because I'm just an interpreter. I think I have vital information that can be helpful to the team and my students. What can I say to the team so that they might invite me to the next meeting?"

BRENDA: Well, I hear this from educational interpreters all the time. In fact, there was a study that showed that more than 60 percent of educational interpreters were not invited to an IEP meeting, so they don't even really know what the student's goals and objectives are. They don't even know what issues that student may be having in different kinds of classes. So, yes, interpreters should be at IEP meetings as an educational interpreter related service provider. They have lots of information about that student. They spend lots of time with that student. They can communicate. They can tell the educational team how that student communicates. They can provide observations on the student's language skills and levels of understanding. They can talk about what interferes with them being able to interpret effectively. They should tell the educational team about what modifications they are using with that student. Sometimes interpreters think, for example, that a student's language isn't good enough and wouldn't understand the teacher's language, so they modify it and make it a little bit simpler. Well, the educational team has to know that. They need to know because maybe the interpreter is actually not correct, and so the educational team needs to know that. They can also provide observations about the student's level of independence and how they may be able to foster more independence in students.

ANDREA: Now we have another question from the audience.

QUESTION 2: "I'm a teacher and had a situation that made me feel really uncomfortable. One of my deaf students called the interpreter a derogatory name—the "B" word—in front of her hearing classmates. Now the interpreter did not interpret the "B" word. Later the interpreter told me about this incident because it was a violation against our school's "no foul language" policy. Afterwards, the student was disciplined for violating this policy. Later, in the IEP meeting, the parent complained that the interpreter violated her daughter's confidentiality by making this report to me. So do deaf or hard of hearing students have a right to confidentiality that hearing

students don't have?"

BRENDA: Wow, this is a really good question. I'd say that, in my perspective, deaf students don't have special rights that are different than the hearing students in the classroom. I think this is a misguided application of the notion of confidentiality within a school setting. If a school has a policy for students, it applies to all students. What also bothers me a bit about your experience is that the hearing students were also exposed to that foul language. So they are also being able to see that a deaf student can get away with something that they can't, and then they were also exposed to language that the school clearly does not want any child to be exposed to. I also am concerned about the adult professional, the interpreter in this situation, being called a foul name by a child and that other students are seeing this child treat this interpreter like that, and it also implies that the student has the right to treat the interpreter with disrespect. So there's many aspects of this experience that you shared with us that make me uncomfortable.

ANDREA: We have another question from the audience.

QUESTION 3: "I'm a school psychologist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing students. I'm having an issue and am looking for some guidance. I'm working with a deaf teenager who has a behavioral disorder, and he frequently signs disruptive phrases and comments during class time. The educational team has decided that the interpreter should no longer interpret these disruptions. However, she continues to do so. She has stated that her code of ethics requires her to communicate everything that the student says. As a result, the student has been kicked out of the classroom multiple times. My question is, then, what is the role of the educational planning team in setting boundaries about what is and what is not interpreted? Thank you."

BRENDA: Well, I'm really glad you asked about this interesting experience that you had. If we go back to the principal that the educational interpreter is a related service provider and member of the educational team, it's their responsibility to implement the team's decision. In this case, it sounds like the educational interpreter made a unilateral decision that actually had a detrimental effect on the deaf or hard of hearing student and on all of the other students in the class. It's not something that an interpreter should do ... to change the decision made by the educational team because they think that it's the right thing to do.

ANDREA: I notice that often people assume that the relationship between a deaf or hard of hearing student and the educational interpreter involves only those two people. But there are other stakeholders involved. Can you explain more about that?

BRENDA: Yeah, you're exactly right, Andrea. There are a lot of stakeholders involved. It's not just about the educational interpreter and the deaf or hard of hearing students even though many people think it is. The administrator, for example, has to know the school's legal obligation to provide an educational interpreter. Classroom teachers need to know that the deaf or hard of hearing student doesn't belong to the educational interpreter. They are a member of the entire classroom environment. The deaf or hard of hearing student not only receives their education through an educational interpreter, but they need to learn how to navigate an interpreted education. Hearing students are also a stakeholder. Many of those students don't know how to talk with a deaf or hard of hearing student using an educational interpreter. And they need to be able to talk with their peers. Parents need to know the pros and cons and their student's rights, and certainly the educational team is another group of stakeholders in this. So there really are more stakeholders than these two individuals.

ANDREA: Wow, there really are more stakeholders involved than I thought! I can remember one

of my high school administrators advocating for my needs because she was familiar with the rights of deaf and hard of hearing students. Can you explain more about the role of school administrators?

BRENDA: Well, you were very lucky to have a knowledgeable administrator. One of the things they really have to understand is their legal rights. I've run into school administrators who really actually don't understand that their school is legally obligated, or they don't know that all interpreters should be highly qualified. I've seen situations where an educational interpreter has taken maybe one or two sign language classes and then, voila, they become an educational interpreter. Administrators must know that most states have minimum standards, and they should be very knowledgeable about their state's minimum standards and other requirements that the state may have. I should mention, though, that many state standards I think are too low to ensure communication success. I think administrators should know that. That they should know that if their state has fairly low standards, maybe their school should have a higher standard. I think they should also understand that the U.S. Department of Education has a policy guidance document that actually has been out for, I'd say, maybe 20 years that directs schools to not just consider the student's academic learning, but they must consider their social, emotional, and cultural needs as well. So, it's not just about academic learning. It's about the whole child.

ANDREA: In addition to that, I've noticed a trend. When a school or program only has a few deaf or hard of hearing students, administrators will, maybe not intentionally, they will ignore those students because it's such a small group of students. Is that common?

BRENDA: Unfortunately, it is somewhat common, especially in schools where there might be just one or two deaf and hard of hearing students. I don't think they maliciously ignore their needs, but hearing loss is a low incidence population and so some of these administrators may have never had experience with managing a deaf or hard of hearing student's education.

ANDREA: Yes, wow, I didn't realize this, but schools have an incredible responsibility to meet not only the deaf and hard of hearing students' academic needs but also their social needs and their cultural needs. Especially when increasingly more deaf and hard of hearing students are students of color and they have different cultural needs as well. It's important for school administrators, and for schools in general, to recognize that.

BRENDA: Yeah, I think ... you know a lot of schools do acknowledge that for their hearing students they have a real obligation to help grow their social skills, but it's easy with a student who is deaf or hard of hearing who is working through an interpreter not to realize how socially isolating that can be for some kids. Schools should promote social interactions. For example, deaf and hard of hearing students should have interpreters at any school-sponsored social event after school or assemblies or sports. That deaf or hard of hearing child has as much right to participate in those social activities as any other student.

ANDREA: Wow, I'm glad you mentioned that about school administrators, and parents and teachers, they all have a role. I recall one event when I was in high school. I was on the high school dance team, and my teammates were going to the national championship. We made preparations and bought the tickets, but then I realized that the school sponsors didn't intend for an interpreter to travel with me to the championship. They weren't covering the interpreter's expenses to travel with me. I didn't think that was fair, but fortunately I had parents who were aware of my rights and knew how to advocate for me. I didn't know my rights at the time, but thankfully they did. And the school administrator was also familiar with my rights. So while the

school sponsor denied my right to an interpreter, the school administrator and my parents worked successfully to make it happen for me. Is that common?

BRENDA: Wow, thanks for sharing that. That's a great story to share. And it is true that you have both a right and a need to have an interpreter there. That was an important social event, and you had a right to have access to every bit of it, so thanks for sharing that.

ANDREA: Sure. Now that you just talked about the school administrator's role, let's talk about the classroom teacher's role which is so important but different. Can you explain more about that?

BRENDA: Yeah. I think there are several things that the classroom teacher really needs to understand. I think, first of all, they really need to understand that learning through an educational interpreter is challenging. They need to know that the deaf student is working a bit harder and having to do things that the other hearing students don't have to do. For example, if a deaf student is watching an interpreter and the classroom teacher is pointing to a map or something, it's pretty challenging for a deaf student to manage those two sources of visual information. Another very important point is that the educational interpreter can do a much better job if they know the teacher's goals—that when you know what the topic is going to be about, your interpretation is better as well. It's very challenging to go into an interpreting situation where you really have no idea of what's coming next. So classroom teachers should share and communicate with their classroom interpreter. They should share their books, their lesson plans, materials. They should also know that the interpreter needs to prepare in advance, that the interpreter may have to look up technical signs, may have to figure out ... may have to really learn a concept a little bit on their own because they are not really understanding this. They can't interpret a concept that they don't really understand.

Another thing that I hear from educational interpreters all the time is that they wish teachers knew that they're not classroom aides, that they're not somebody in the classroom that, if they forgot to copy something in the morning, that they send the interpreter out to copy. That they're there to facilitate communication throughout the classroom for everybody, not just that deaf or hard of hearing student. And so a student should never miss classroom communication because an educational interpreter is doing another task. So if an educational interpreter is not interpreting because maybe the student's doing seatwork, they should be preparing for future assignments.

ANDREA: Thank you for naming and describing the different responsibilities for the classroom teacher. I can remember one teacher that I'm very thankful for ... she provided my interpreter with a textbook for the class, like a history textbook, and also provided that interpreter with notes. Looking back, I can see that really benefitted me as a student. It's also important for the teacher to understand that the interpreter is not a disciplinarian, and if a deaf or hard of hearing student needs help, the student needs to rely on the teacher, not the interpreter. Thank you for explaining that.

BRENDA Yeah, I hear that from interpreters a lot—that the teacher expects them to discipline the deaf or hard of hearing student. It singles out the deaf or hard of hearing student in the first place that this other person is taking care of you, but all the hearing students are under the hearing teacher's discipline. So it's really important that the hearing teacher acknowledge that that deaf or hard of hearing student is a member of his or her class.

ANDREA: Because I've experienced during interpreters from K-12 programs, I have an idea about what I should have known as a student. Many deaf or hard of hearing students today work with educational interpreters. What do you think they should know about an interpreted education?

BRENDA: I love that question because I think most times people sort of leave deaf and hard of hearing students out of this equation. I think in the first place they should know that learning and making friends using an educational interpreter is challenging. I think that they should know that because it is a difficult situation, they might internalize it and think that they're doing something wrong when in reality even deaf adults report that this is ... can be challenging. I think that they should know that they have a right to talk with the educational interpreter about their communication preferences, about when they want the interpreter to back off and leave them alone, when they want the interpreter to be there, when they think they can handle an interpreting situation by themselves.

ANDREA: Yes, I've noticed that different students have different needs and that different schools provide different resources. My own communication preference depends on where I am, and what type of class I'm taking, and what kind of social interaction happens in the class. For example, in a math class, I typically prefer a sign language interpreter. For a lecture class, such as an English class, I prefer having real-time captioning. I think it is important for deaf and hard of hearing students to know that they have the right to different options and know what those options are. Of course it will depend on what is available, but they need to know what they can choose from. Could you expand more on that?

BRENDA: Yeah. I remember you told me that often when you met a person for the first time you really wanted an interpreter there until you really could see whether or not that person was understandable, and I really like that comment.

ANDREA Yes, I have realized that when I had a female professor, for example, I could read her lips easily. At first I needed an interpreter, but after frequent interactions with this professor I become used to her approach and speech. But, you're right, if it's a new person, I tend to need an interpreter. It's different for everyone, I guess.

BRENDA: I think it is different for everybody. Deaf and hard of hearing kids represent a range of different kinds of communication styles and preferences. I also think it's important for deaf and hard of hearing students to know that they have a right to understand their teachers and classmates. Now this is a bit challenging because both deaf and hard of hearing students and hearing students are challenged in knowing when they don't understand. My college students sometimes aren't aware when they aren't understanding a concept. So I sometimes hear educational interpreters say to me, "Well, I just tell the student, 'Tell me if you are not understanding,'" not realizing that that is really a cognitively tough task to do. But they do need to know that they have a right to understand. Another really critical fact is that they should know that if they're 14 years or older, they have a right to be in the IEP meeting. They have a right to start defining what their educational program looks like, so they need to be there as an active member. They also have a right to an interpreter for after-school activities, sports, and assemblies that sometimes the school denies students an interpreter and they don't realize that they really have a right to be there. Another issue that I think deaf and hard of hearing students are rarely told is that interpreters and other school professionals may be obligated to report certain kinds of talk in school, such as some schools have a policy that if a student, students, are talking about an after-school party where they have illegal substances, many times that professional has to report it to the school administration. Interpreters are not exempt from that,



but the student needs to know what kinds of talk is going to be reported. They need to know their boundaries, and often they're not told those until after the fact.

ANDREA: I want to add a thought about the interpreter's role in contributing to students' social development. There can be some negatives to it. While it's incredibly positive that interpreters provide students opportunities with their peers and their teachers, it can also be difficult if, for example, a male deaf or hard of hearing student wants to interact with his peers to discuss a party after school or something like that, but the student may not be comfortable to communicate through an interpreter. So situations like this happen, and is this just a matter of having to accept the good with the bad?

BRENDA: That's not a great situation. I feel for young adolescent students who are male. Most of their interpreters are females. I mean, we've got to recruit more men into the interpreting profession for sure.

ANDREA: Yes, yes, I agree.

BRENDA: You know, another thing that I think deaf and hard of hearing students really need to know—by the time they graduate from high school, they should know how to use an interpreter as an adult. Many of them are going to continue to use interpreters as adults, and they need to know how to work with interpreters, how to schedule interpreters. Another thing I think schools really need to help deaf and hard of hearing students with is learning how to use Video Relay Services. Some deaf students who come to college don't even know about that service.

ANDREA: I must admit that I am one of those deaf or hard of hearing students who just learned how to make interpreter requests for things like social events. I graduated from high school about 10 years ago, so I know this about deaf and hard of hearing students. It's important for the students to have access to deaf and hard of hearing adults because, for example, if you are at an IEP meeting and you ask a student what their preferences are, they may not know how to respond because they haven't had that experience beforehand. It's important for the deaf and hard of hearing students, as well as their parents, to interact with adults who have had this experience with educational interpreting and who can help students transition.

BRENDA: Thanks for adding that. That is such a great point. I think that deaf and hard of hearing students do have the right to meet and interact with deaf and hard of hearing adults. I include "hard of hearing" very explicitly because, for many hard of hearing students, their use of an interpreter may be different than how a deaf person uses an interpreter so what might be a good role model for that student needs to sort of match who they are in terms of communication. So it's really important for deaf and hard of hearing students to learn to advocate for themselves, and sometimes they can get that information and knowledge from other deaf and hard of hearing adults. That's an important source. I really encourage schools to encourage parents to send children to things like Junior NAD, and in the Denver metro area we have a teen club where kids from all over the community come together. I think that's critically important that they have some times that they get to see people who are like them.

ANDREA: I strongly encourage parents to look out for those types of resources because you can't always assume the schools will share with students information that is out there and available for students to take advantage of and experience. Now we have a question from the audience.

QUESTION 4: "I'm an educational interpreter working with a couple of students who have cochlear implants. One of my students actually speaks for herself using her own voice some of the time. How do I handle this?"

BRENDA: Well, this is increasingly becoming an issue that lots of educational interpreters are asking me about. It's becoming very complex. We recently did a survey of educational interpreters, and 60 percent of them say that they interpret for a student who talks for themselves, at least often, or a lot of the time so our population is changing. We have students who really are completely capable of carrying on conversations with other peers, so we have to understand that educational interpreters really have a role in fostering the use and development of spoken language. They may have to, or want to, encourage a deaf student to go ahead and try talking with the teacher one on one using their spoken English and, "I'll be your backup if you need any help. I'm going to help you out on this." So there may be situations that the interpreter really has to figure out not to interpret in that situation and let the child try to handle it themselves, but that varies with the communication. You mentioned a couple of situations, like meeting a new person where you want an interpreter, or social situations where you actually don't want an interpreter, you would like to handle that situation on your own. Or a faculty member who you can communicate with pretty easily using spoken English. So that's the same thing that's true for many of these kids in the school. They may need an interpreter for a lecture. They may not need an interpreter when they're working with a group project. So it's very important to know your student and know what skills they have and what skills people are wanting to encourage and develop.

ANDREA: I must add to that ... It's really important that we respect the deaf or hard of hearing student's choices. For example, I've noticed some interpreters, even though they mean well, they do, but if they notice that a deaf or hard of hearing student is opting not to use their voice, the interpreter might try to push the student to do so anyway. Or if the interpreter feels that a deaf or hard of hearing student should be signing instead of using their voice, the interpreter may tell the student, "Go ahead and sign; I'll speak for you." There are boundaries. The interpreter really has an important role in supporting the student's social, academic, linguistic, and emotional development, but how do they know their boundaries?

BRENDA: Yeah, thanks for saying that. In fact, I'm going to share an experience I had with a hard of hearing PhD student of mine. She would go to conferences with me. And she often, like you, would—with some speakers she could understand them pretty well; other speakers she couldn't and so she would look back and forth from the Interpreter to the speaker occasionally. She had an interpreter tell her, "Please choose one language." And, to me, that was really offensive. This student has a right to decide her own communication needs. So that's ... I think that's important that ... I think interpreters are just going to have to get more used to working with people who really do have both spoken English skills and sign language skills.

ANDREA: I've experienced both the advantages and disadvantages of a mainstream education with educational interpreters. There are many pros and cons. Can you explain some of them?

BRENDA: Yeah, I'd like to share my thoughts on that. Well, the advantages are, of course, that it makes it possible for a deaf or hard of hearing student to attend their local public school. It gives them more time with their families. Sometimes the only option of a deaf school is so far away they spend a great deal of time traveling, and many of them can be successful in an interpreted education. Some cannot, but many of them can. I think you're a great example of that. Interpreters in a public school can facilitate communication with both hearing peers and with teachers.

ANDREA: In my K-12 experience, watching interpreters worked for me. But will that work for all deaf or hard of hearing students? No. Different students have different needs. Also, I noticed that there are some disadvantages to watching an interpreter. What might those be?

BRENDA: Yeah, there are some real disadvantages to an interpreted education. We know that it's not the same as having direct access. Deaf adults tell us that. Lots of people tell us that—that it's always much better to learn from somebody who's talking to you directly. We also know that students and adults report that if they're watching an interpreter all day long, it's very fatiguing. They come home and they're really fatigued. It's quite hard on both the brain and on the eyes. And we should also be clear that there are many professionals and deaf adults who believe that an interpreted education is a compromised education, that it is limited. And part of that is because interpreting is a very complex and challenging skill. It takes a long time to become a good interpreter and qualified interpreters are really difficult to find, particularly out in these rural areas. And so schools may be hiring an interpreter who's really not that qualified and that actually adds to the disadvantages in a big way. So if the interpreter's not qualified, I would also agree that it is a compromised education.

ANDREA: I must emphasize the importance of students' social development. The educational interpreter's role in their social development is critical.

BRENDA: Yes, it really needs to be emphasized because I think a lot of people, once again, think that school is about academics when in reality it's about human development so ... Andrea, what do you think parents and students need to know about educational interpreting?

ANDREA: When I look back and think about my own experiences watching an interpreter in K-12, I do wish I had known at the time what my rights were. I think it's important that deaf or hard of hearing students and their parents advocate for their needs, know that they can advocate, but first they must understand what their rights are. That's just so important. It's also important to understand how other deaf and hard of hearing adults, how did they navigate their education with interpreters. How did they get to where they are now? How did they transition from high school to college or vocation? What were their options? What do you think?

BRENDA: Oh, I agree with that completely. I think that part of any deaf or hard of hearing student's transition plan should be helping them understand what interpreting is like when they get into the adult Deaf community, and I think your point about parents and students learning to advocate for themselves, learning their rights is critically important. I 100 percent support you in that, yes.

Well, we've covered a lot of ground today related to educational interpreting, so I'd like to take a few minutes to sort of summarize what we've gone through. We've talked about federal laws and how that affects the context of educational interpreting. We've talked about the control that state departments of education have over establishing minimum standards for educational interpreting. We've talked about that very important fact that the educational interpreter is a related service provider and a member of the educational team. I always think that the educational interpreter's main goal is to maximize a deaf or hard of hearing student's learning opportunities. So they really ... the word *education* in "educational interpreter" is really an important word. They simply don't function like community interpreters in many regards, and they are obligated—legally obligated—to work with the educational team. So it's also important to remember that while many deaf and hard of hearing students can be successful in an interpreted education, not all can, and we need to constantly be evaluating whether a specific

student is learning or ... and is having peer relationships or is challenged by that. It's also very important for the deaf or hard of hearing student to learn how to manage their own interpreted education. Many will be using interpreters the rest of their lives, and learning how to manage that is very critical.

ANDREA: Thank you so much, Dr. Schick. I learned so much from you, and I am sure the audience feels the same. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and your skills. I think it was so important that you described the difference between educational interpreters and community interpreters because many deaf and hard of hearing students and their parents will sooner or later be involved in transitional planning, and it's just important to note that there are options after K-12 programs are completed. Thank you so much for coming here today. Can you also talk to us about your experience working with the Clerc Center and with the interpreter tip sheets that are available?

BRENDA: Oh, I'd love to talk about that. Working with the Clerc Center, we developed a series of six tip sheets related to educational interpreters, focusing each tip sheet on some of the different constituencies, and they really are very good. We have a tip sheet on what administrators should know in terms of legal requirements and all of that kind of stuff. We have a tip sheet for the classroom teacher and how they can help the educational interpreter do a better job, and what they should know about an interpreted education. We have a tip sheet for the interpreters especially focusing on that concept of being a related service provider and how that affects all sorts of other things that they do. We have a tip sheet for parents, that some parents helped me develop, to help them understand their student's rights and what the responsibilities of the school are. One of my favorites is a tip sheet for the students that really helps them understand what rights they have in an interpreted education. Finally, we produced a sixth tip sheet recently. I produced it with Frances Beurivage and Cathy Carrota at Boys Town National Research Hospital that focuses on interpreting for children with cochlear implants. We are increasingly facing questions from the interpreting profession about, "How do I work with this child? What do I need to do?" so I think that tip sheet is a very timely addition. I really appreciate the Clerc Center working with me on developing these, and I should mention that they are free.

ANDREA: Free is always a good thing! I wish I had access to tips like that when I was a K-12 student.

Parents, deaf and hard of hearing students, teachers, interpreters, and school administrators, if any of you are interested in these interpreter tip sheets, go to the Clerc Center website. The Clerc Center website also has a number of different resources on other topics that might be of interest to you.

Thank you, Dr. Schick, for coming to talk with us. We all really benefited from your knowledge and expertise. Thank you so much!

BRENDA: Well, thank you, too, Andrea! You brought a wealth of experience to this webcast, and I know that parents and students and everybody will really appreciate your experiences in the K-12 environment using an interpreter so thank you for bringing your own experiences.

ANDREA: Thank you.

BRENDA: Thank you.