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Amy Drewek

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Uncovering an Ontological Framework for Supporting
ASL-English Interpreters along a Meaningful Path to Self-Efficacy

Amy Drewek
Gallaudet University

Abstract

Deficits in the systems inherent to the field of ASL-English interpreting have resulted in gaps and barriers that impact novice interpreter practitioners. As a potential mitigating factor, research has shown the importance of developing confidence and self-efficacy in novice interpreters. Due to time and curricular restraints, the current system for educating potential interpreters often cannot focus on developing these essential psychological skills. As such, graduates of IEPs regularly experience entry-to-practice barriers due to a lack of skill readiness, thus seeking mentorship relationships to bridge these gaps. Using a constructivist and interpretivist orientation, this qualitative case study explored the perceived effects that participation in a formal, time-specific, distance mentorship program had on the development of confidence and self-efficacy in five novice interpreters. The research question guiding this study was: How do novice interpreters reflect on possible changes in their self-efficacy, measured through confidence, both during and after their involvement in a formal, time-specific mentorship program? The researcher gathered data in two phases using multiple data collection techniques, including questionnaires, surveys, document review, and semi-structured interviews. The data were coded and analyzed to assess participants' perspectives on increases in confidence and self-efficacy both during and after participation in the mentorship program. The findings of this study contribute to the literature on the development of the psychological skills of confidence and self-efficacy and offer practical techniques for enhancing these psychological skills in interpreters. The resulting NEST Ontological Framework could be applied in formal mentoring programs to support the development of confidence and self-efficacy in novice interpreters.