Phase 6:

Interpreter Considerations

VRS Feasibility Study

Mission Consulting

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH SUMMARY

INTERPRETER CONSIDERATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Overview

This research summary represents the findings of the sixth of twelve phases of a study commissioned by Bell Canada (Bell). The feasibility study was commissioned by Bell as part of a deferral account proposal. The objective of the feasibility study is to provide information to facilitate informed decisions regarding potential regulations and implementation of Canadian video relay service (VRS). Bell engaged Mission Consulting to conduct an independent and comprehensive study of the feasibility of VRS for Canada. The final feasibility report will draw, in part, on information contained in this research summary.

This Phase 6 research summary, *Interpreter Considerations*, provides a synopsis of a variety of information pertaining to potential VRS interpreters. Interpreters are critical to ensuring a Canadian model for VRS that will work for regulators, providers and consumers. This synopsis includes:

- ☑ Definition / History of the profession, types of interpreters, and languages used
- ☑ Work and processes of interpreters
- ☑ Interpreting in the VRS environment
- ☑ Accreditation and evaluation procedures in ASL and LSQ; national and provincial level.
- ☑ Estimated numbers of ASL and LSQ interpreters and forecasted growth
- ☑ Summary of questionnaire responses from: referral agencies and professional organizations
- ☑ Description of interpreter training programs in Canada
- ☑ Potential responses to a forecast shortage of qualified interpreters.

2. Summary Findings

Salient points of this analysis of interpreter considerations for VRS include the following:

- ☐ Shortage of interpreters is a concern of all stakeholders.
- ☐ Collaboration with interpreter training programs, referral agencies, and professional groups to prevent critical shortages for community interpreting is strongly suggested.
- ☐ Significant differences including preparation, skills, and consumer expectations exist between VRS and community interpreting.

□ Minimum requirements for hiring ASL-English interpreters to work in VRS setting should ideally include active membership in the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada plus community experience.

□ Minimum requirements for hiring LSQ-French interpreters should ideally include graduation from visual interpreting diploma program at Université of Québec at Montréal or specific screening procedures.

□ For Inuit and Maritime populations the addition of a Deaf interpreter may be a solution.

□ Stakeholders believe community education and outreach will be needed for VRS.

□ Restructuring interpreter training from diploma programs to degree programs may increase labour pool.

□ Increased funding will be required for interpreter training programs to expand.

□ Existing Sorenson call centres in Canada and the populations they serve may have a significant impact on the availability of interpreters for ASL-English VRS.

The research for this phase 6, *Interpreter Considerations*, included creation and distribution of three questionnaires to interpreter training programs, interpreter referral agencies, and interpreter professional organizations. Several of these organizations were then contacted for interviews and consultations regarding a variety of information pertaining to VRS for Canada. The opinions and concerns of these stakeholders are summarized in this report to provide information about potential areas of significance regarding interpreter availability for VRS in Canada.

3. Conclusion

Critical shortages of sign language interpreters are widely reported, particularly in rural areas. However, the question is not whether there are enough interpreters to support VRS for Canada, but rather how to effectively create strategies to increase the labour pool, balance community needs, and prevent shortages. Potential VRS providers for Canada should be cognizant of the community's concerns and work closely with these organizations to implement a VRS that effectively utilizes the resources available.

Interpreter Considerations

RESEARCH SUMMARY

1. The VRS Feasibility Study

This research summary represents the findings of the sixth of twelve phases of a study commissioned by Bell Canada (Bell). The feasibility study was commissioned by Bell as part of a deferral account proposal. The objective of the feasibility study is to provide information to facilitate informed decisions regarding potential regulations and implementation of Canadian video relay service (VRS). Bell engaged Mission Consulting to conduct an independent and comprehensive study of the feasibility of VRS for Canada. The final feasibility report will draw, in part, on information contained in this research summary.

The twelve phases of the study are as follows:

Phase 1   Project Confirmation

Phase 2   Legal Background for Canadian VRS

Phase 3   Consumer Interests and Perspectives

Phase 4   VRS Models in Other Countries

Phase 5   Technologies and their Forecasts

Phase 6   Interpreter Considerations

Phase 7   Quality of Service

Phase 8   Potential Related Services

Phase 9   Forecasts of VRS User Demand

Phase 10   VRS Cost Variables and Forecasts

Phase 11   Potential Canadian VRS Models

Phase 12   VRS Feasibility Study Report

This Phase 6 research summary, *Interpreter Considerations*, provides a synopsis of a variety of information pertaining to potential VRS interpreters and is closely related to the research from Phase 3 Consumer Considerations. Interpreters are critical to ensuring a Canadian model for VRS that will work for regulators, providers and consumers. This synopsis includes:

☑ Definition / History of the profession, types of interpreters, and languages used

☑ Work and processes of interpreters

☑ Interpreting in the VRS environment

☑ Accreditation and evaluation procedures in ASL and LSQ; national and provincial level.

☑ Estimated numbers of ASL and LSQ interpreters and forecasted growth

☑ Summary of questionnaire responses from: referral agencies and professional organizations

☑ Description of interpreter training programs in Canada

☑ Potential responses to a forecast shortage of qualified interpreters.

The research for Phase 6 *Interpreter Considerations*, included creation and distribution of questionnaires specific to each type of group: interpreter training programs, interpreter referral agencies, and interpreter professional organizations.   The questionnaires were sent via email to the respective organizations with instructions to collect information from all interested parties within the organization, but to return only one completed questionnaire representative of the entire organization. A response rate of 66% was achieved with 23 out of 35 questionnaires returned for inclusion in this study. The specific number of responses for each type of questionnaire sent and received is summarized in the following table.

Table 1: Organizations Surveyed

Type	Number Received	Number Sent
Interpreter Training	9	10
LSQ-French Training[1]	4	4
ASL-English Training	5	6
Professional Organizations[2]	3	9
Referral Agencies	11	16
LSQ-French Agencies	7	8
ASL-English Agencies	4	8
Total	23	35

Several of these organizations were then contacted for follow up interviews and consultations regarding information pertaining to VRS for Canada. These consultations were conducted in-person, via Skype, or through email correspondence. The opinions and concerns of these stakeholders are summarized in this

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[1] Included one cued speech trainer, not technically an interpreter trainer.

[2] National chapter: Association of Visual Language Interpreters (AVLIC). Affiliate Chapters: Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI) and Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Alberta (ASLIA).

report to provide information about potential areas of significance regarding interpreter availability for VRS in Canada.

2. Introduction and History of Visual Language Interpreting

2.1. Background of Interpreting Profession

Sign language or visual language interpreters[3] work to facilitate communication and create a bridge between people who do not share a common language. Simply defined, interpretation takes the spoken or written language and transmits it into a signed or visual language for the purpose of facilitating communication between Deaf and hearing people. However, the procedures involved in the interpreting process are far more complex and are both cultural and linguistic in nature, crossing over different modalities. Interpreters are bilingual-bicultural professionals who interpret linguistic and cultural information, while being sensitive to environmental factors, which may foster or impede the message.

Interpreting is a fairly young profession; however there were probably family members and friends of Deaf people interpreting in some form of visual language for as long as the use of language has existed. In the beginning, interpreters were individuals who typically:

1. Had Deaf parents, siblings, or other relatives
2. Were teachers of the Deaf
3. Were members of the clergy[4]

These individuals were volunteers who interpreted out of the goodness of their hearts or an obligation to family members; at this time these services were determined adequate. The shift toward professional interpreting occurred during the 1960's and 1970's. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) was established in 1964 during a national meeting at Ball State Teacher's Colleges in Muncie, Indiana U.S. Following the meeting, a group of sign language interpreters, who were hired to interpret for the Deaf during the meeting, decided to stay an additional day to discuss creating a list of qualified interpreters to meet the increased demands for interpreting services. RID incorporated in 1972 and sign language interpreters from Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada joined RID to take part in this shift towards establishing a professional organization for interpreters.[5]

In Canada, the profession evolved similarly, with interpreters tending to be family or friends of Deaf people. In the 1970's many Canadian interpreters were members of RID and began establishing affiliate

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[3] Interpreters as defined for this report refer to LSQ/French and ASL/English interpreters.

[4] Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting.* 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 262.

[5] Ibid Pg. 263-264.

chapters such as The Manitoba RID (MRID in 1976) and Alberta RID (ACRID in 1977).[6] However, RID was insufficient to satisfy the needs of Canadian interpreters, who wanted a professional organization that best represented the specific needs of Canada. With support and input from the Canadian Deaf community, the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) was founded in 1979. This collaborative effort between the Deaf community and the interpreting community is of paramount importance to AVLIC and is the basic foundation that continues to influence the professional activities of the organization.[7]

Additionally, LSQ-French interpreters were in need of a specific organization to address their unique needs. In response the Association Québecoise des Interpreters Francophones en Language Visuel (AQIFLV) was formed on September 25, 1982 in Montreal, Québec.[8] However, in October 2004 AQIFLV officially ceased operations.[9]

The profession has evolved over the last 50 years and the following theoretical philosophies show the progression from oppression to empowerment of the Deaf client.

Table 2: Philosophical Frames of Interpreting[10]

TIME PERIOD	PHILOSOPHY
1960's and earlier	**HELPER:** • Perceives Deaf as handicapped, incapable of managing personal or business affairs. • Interpreter is considered to be a caretaker whose main responsibility is to help; often steps out of role to advise and influence their clients. • Considers Deaf culture norms as inappropriate; views signed language as poorly educated version of a spoken language, such as English or French.

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[6] Ibid Pg. 267.

[7] Ibid

[8] http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Common/ResearchN/Items/1_Chapter%2012.pdf

[9] http://www.avlic.ca/files/pdf/newsletters/2005_avlic_winter.pdf

[10] Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting.* 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 171-178.

TIME PERIOD	PHILOSOPHY
Late 60's early 70's	**MACHINE CONDUIT:** • Considers Deaf people as responsible for their own lives, but does not recognize signed language as a true language; views spoken language as superior. • In response to the view that helper philosophy was oppressive, an extreme shift to an attempt to have no influence on the communication. • Characterized by an almost robot like verbatim translation, very rigid and inflexible.
1970's – late 1980's	**COMMUNICATION FACILITATION:** • Perceives Deaf people as a segment of the handicapped population, who are seeking inclusion in the majority non-disabled community. • Considers signed language a useful tool for less educated or less intelligent people; views spoken language as superior. • Focuses on the semantics of interpreting (e.g. lighting, clothing, visual distractions).
Current	**BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL** • Views Deaf people as part of an oppressed minority; recognizes signed language as an official language with its own culture. • Interpreter's role is to equalize communication and empowerment of the Deaf and hearing people involved. • Interpretation is defined broadly and includes linguistic and cultural mediations, and various models of complex mental processing procedures that enable interpretations to cross over linguistic and cultural differences.

These theories also show the evolution of the shift of power from the hearing community to the Deaf community. The bilingual-bicultural theory empowers the Deaf individual by levelling the communication playing field through the recognition that culture and language cannot be separated. One recurring theme from interviews with various interpreter organizations is the importance of applying this philosophy in the training of interpreters. They report that in order to provide effective interpretations, one must have training that encompasses all aspects of the linguistic and cultural interpretation process. Only obtaining competence in the language, without taking specific training in interpreting is never adequate for interpreting work.[11]

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[11] Mission Consulting Interviews with Canadian interpreter professionals and training programs. See Appendix A for list of all organizations.

Interpreting, as a profession, requires a variety of complex skills and competencies that cannot simply be taught. The necessary skills need to be cultivated through experience and engagement with the Deaf community, which is very diverse and varied in its communication preferences. An interpreter must be able to recognize these differences, as well as a multitude of other nuances in a very short amount of time, in order to achieve a communication that occurs on an equivalent level to that of spoken language.

> *"...interpreting involves the ability to accurately represent a message expressed in one language, its meaning and intent including its cultural components, into another language with its cultural components, without changing the meaning. The goal is that the interpretation conveys the same message to those who utilize a second language as would be conveyed directly to those who receive the original message in their own language."*[12]

Typically, a sign language interpreter is a hearing individual fluent in a spoken language and a visual language (e.g. French and LSQ or English and ASL). Most sign-language interpreters either interpret, between English and ASL or French and LSQ, or transliterate, facilitating communication between English/French and contact signing—a form of signing that follows a spoken language-based word order. Other interpreters may specialize in oral interpreting for deaf, late deafened or hard of hearing persons who prefer lip reading over visual language. Other specialties include using cued speech, signing exact English or French, or interpreting for people who are blind as well as deaf by making manual signs into their hands, often referred to as tactile signing. A full analysis of the various communication preferences can be found in this study's Phase 3 research on consumers, however it is important to note here as interpreters need to be aware of these differences and be able to accommodate various situations. This skill is usually obtained by completing coursework in interpreting.

Some assume that sign language is universal and can be understood and used by Deaf people all around the world.   This is not the case; signed languages differ across the globe. In Canada, sign language interpreters provide interpretation between English and American Sign Language (ASL), or in several French-speaking territories and throughout Québec, between French and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ).[13] Although ASL and LSQ share many grammatical and structural properties and are both influenced by LSF (French Sign Language), they are in fact separate languages.

 Another type of interpreter is the Deaf interpreter, or DI, who typically works in tandem with a hearing interpreter to improve communications for a Deaf person who uses a non-standard sign language, regional dialect, or some other form of visual communication. The DI has many potential uses, but most commonly is known for acting as a relay between a hearing interpreter and a Deaf consumer, with the

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[12] Gordon, M.G. and Hardy, M. *Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and Interpreter Education in BC*, Dec 2009, pg. 1. https://www.cacuss.ca/content/documents/Link/CADSPPE_Resources/ASL_Deaf_Studies_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

[13] Other visual languages used in Canada include Inuit Sign Language used in Northern Canada by the Deaf Inuit population and Maritime Sign Language, which is sometimes used in Eastern Canada.

purpose of compensating for differences in language due to the consumer's educational and language background.[14] For the VRS setting, a Deaf interpreter is often called upon to facilitate communication, as the Deaf caller may be using idiosyncratic language that the hearing interpreter is unfamiliar with. The use of DIs in VRS is extremely useful because the calls coming in are from such a diverse population with many different language abilities. The concept of a Deaf interpreter in Canada has other implications due to the existence of Inuit Sign Language, Maritime Sign Language, and in regard to the two official languages, English-ASL and French-LSQ. The DI may have fluency in both ASL and LSQ and therefore can help facilitate communication between users of each language, as well as act as an intermediary between hearing ASL/English interpreters and LSQ/French interpreters.[15] For example, if a hearing French speaker needs to communicate with an ASL Deaf individual, one possible solution would be to utilize a LSQ-ASL DI and hearing interpreters (HI):

Figure 1: LSQ-ASL Deaf Interpreter
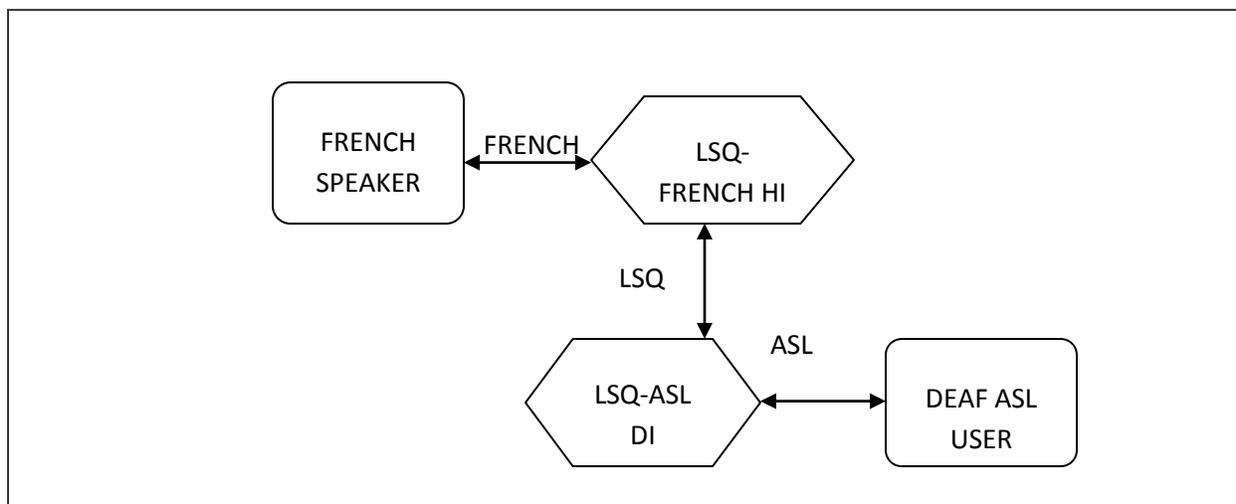
This diagram shows one of the many different configurations that could be made utilizing the services of a Deaf interpreter. The LSQ to ASL Deaf interpreter may have implications on the specific setting of Video Relay Services, as a potential intermediary for ASL / English and LSQ / French users. Furthermore, the services of a Deaf Interpreter may be needed for the Inuit population and users of Maritime Sign Language. The Inuit Deaf community in the northern regions of Canada use Inuit Sign Language (ISL), which is not yet recognized as an official language. However, researchers at McGill University are working on documenting the language in order to lead to official language status. The language is described as a personal sign language that is used within the family, but many of the Deaf Inuit across the region report using similar hand signals leading to the recognition that it is more than just home

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[14] Boudreault, Patrick. "*Deaf Interpreters.*"*Topics in Signed Language Interpreting*, 2005. Pg. 331

[15] Ibid. Pg. 328

signs[16] or gestures within a family. There are an estimated 155 to 200 Deaf Inuit people in Nunavut, although most learn ASL in southern schools, some do not.[17]

According to an AVLIC interpreter who works within the Deaf Inuit population, the need for interpreting services is great. Access to interpreters is limited and mostly provided by friends or family members knowledgeable in the language, but not in the process of interpreting. In this interpreter's experience most ISL signs are produced interchangeably with ASL and resemble more of a contact variety[18] of sign language. She reports she has yet to meet an ISL only user and instead encounters a contact variety combining ISL, ASL, and home signs.[19] For the purposes of VRS, it may be helpful to utilize the services of a Deaf interpreter as an intermediary when taking calls from this population.

Maritime Sign Language is a signed language used by Deaf people in Canada's Maritime Provinces. Currently the majority of Deaf Anglophone Canadians use American Sign Language (ASL), but some elderly Deaf people continue to use MSL, which is believed to have originated from British Sign Language (BSL). The predominance of ASL has impinged on MSL in the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and has become the majority language. Estimates place the number of MSL users at slightly below 100.[20] MSL does not appear to be a considerable factor for VRS, but possibly another opportunity for a Deaf interpreter to facilitate communication if needed.

2.2.   Forms of Interpreting

Interpreters need to be cognizant of the various forms of communication modes[21] used by the Deaf community and be able to accommodate those forms. American Sign Language and Langue des Signes Québécoise are both visual gestural languages with distinct grammar and syntax that are not based on spoken language. This form of communication is the most often used by interpreters. However, some forms of sign language are derived from spoken language and interpreters may encounter these forms in addition to ASL or LSQ. The general term for these derivatives is *sign supported speech*, which encompasses all the forms of spoken language (e.g. French or English) based signing systems. All of

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[16] Home signs: system of pantomime, gestures and manual signs used within a family to support communication in place of formal sign language.

Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting*. 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 105.

[17] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2008/09/17/inuit-sign.html

[18] Signing that reflects a mixture of structures as a result of prolonged contact between languages.

Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting*. 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 105.

[19] AVLIC Email correspondence 05/17/2011

[20] Abstract:Canada's Maritime Sign Language, *Yoel, Judith*, Ph.D., University of Manitoba (Canada), 2009 http://gradworks.umi.com/NR/64/NR64276.html

[21] See Phase 3 Consumers for detailed description of communication preferences.

these systems attempt to represent spoken language in a manual/visual form.[22] One example is signed French, which uses mostly LSQ signs and follows French structure. Signs to represent smaller lexical units (e.g. le, la, les) are included, but these signs were created by hearing teachers to teach French.[23] Signing systems are controversial in the Deaf community, and are viewed by many as attempts to oppress Deaf people and force them to give up their cultural linguistic identity. For example, the Canadian Association for the Deaf states:

> *"The natural language of Deaf people is Sign language. In Canada there are two legitimate Sign languages: American Sign Language (ASL) and la Langue des Sourds du Québec (LSQ); there is also a regional dialect, Maritimes Sign Language (MSL). The capitalized term "Sign language" refers only to these and to the true Deaf languages of other countries (British Sign Language, French Sign Language, etc.) These Sign languages have been recognized internationally as legitimate languages with their own grammar, syntax, and vocabulary…*
>
> *Several varieties of sign systems (pseudo sign "languages") have been developed by non-Deaf people, such as Seeing Exact English, Signed English, Cued Speech, Manually Coded English, and others. These are systems rather than languages, because they were artificially invented instead of naturally developed. They deform the true Sign language in order to make it conform to the grammar and syntax of a verbal language (English or French). The Canadian Association of the Deaf considers such sign systems to be a form of cultural oppression."[24]*

However, it should be noted that in Québec these other codes or systems are sometimes the only form of interpretation offered in certain regions. The Centre québécois de la déficience auditive (CQDA) makes the following comment in regard to these codes:

> *"Although there are different forms of interpreting, there is, for CQDA, a difference between sign language and codes. Sign languages are cultural as where codes and modes are only tools for better literacy mostly used with children. These codes and modes are very controversial in Québec, but they do exist, and are mainly used in some Québec regions as the sole form of interpretation and cannot be put aside without discriminating some Deaf and hard of hearing individuals while work is being done on sign language and Deaf culture recognition."[25]*

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[22] Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting.* 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 89-95.

[23] Suzanne Villeneuve (UQAM) Email correspondence 05/11/2011.

[24] Canadian Association of the Deaf's Position Paper on Languages. http://www.cad.ca/language.php

[25] CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

Another form of language that has developed from the long contact between two languages is called Pidgin, also referred to as contact varieties. For example, LSQ and French have had contact with each other for so many years that some Deaf people use a blended form of the two. Again, the views are mixed as some see this as a natural progression of modern ASL/LSQ, while others view it as an inferior form of ASL/LSQ.[26] Regardless of the controversial nature of these systems, the fact remains that they exist and interpreters serving the Deaf community will encounter these communication preferences. Therefore, the following is a brief overview of terms used to describe the different forms of work a visual language interpreter may be called upon to perform.

Interpretation:

- Cultural and linguistic features of a message in one language are taken in and analyzed, then transferred into *another language* (e.g. Spoken French to LSQ and LSQ to Spoken French).
- Includes tactile and up close signing for Deaf-Blind individuals.

Transliteration:

- Features of a message from one language are taken in and then expressed in a different form of the *same language* (e.g. English to signed English).
- Often includes clear mouthing of the words accompanied by sign supported speech.

A different form of interpreting is oral transliteration provided by oral interpreters for oral deaf individuals.[27] This form of interpreting does not include signed languages, but rather lip reading with or without natural gestures. Yet another form is cued speech or *Langage parle complete* (LPC) in Québec, which uses a manual coding system to represent individual language phonemes for the purpose of learning speech. These two forms do not use signed language or sign supported speech and as such are not often included in traditional definitions of visual interpreting. AVLIC does not include oral or cued speech in their definition and instead only represent interpreters whose working languages are ASL-English or LSQ-French. Sign supported speech requests do occur and AVLIC reports that a foundation in ASL or LSQ makes it easy to accommodate those requests.[28] It should be noted that oral transliteration is used in Québec and oral interpreters are employed by agencies that also provide visual language services.[29] In addition according to CQDA, The Québec School Board employs individuals to provide signed French and cued speech and those individuals are considered interpreters under the same

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[26] Humphrey, J. and Alcorn, B. *So You Want to Be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting.* 4th Edition, 2007. Pg. 96-106.

[27] Ibid. Pg 106; Oral deaf individuals do not use Sign language and instead use their own speech and speech reading abilities. (e.g. lip reading).

[28] AVLIC Email correspondence 05/31/2011

[29] Questionnaire responses from SIVET, SAIDE, SRIAT, and SIPSE.

professional title as LSQ-French interpreters. The CQDA states that the same procedure occurs for pidgin, oral interpretation, and LSQ:[30]

> *"...College and universities hire individuals on an interpreter basis, may they do oral interpretation, pidgin, LSQ, or any other code or mode. Therefore, in Québec, a visual interpreter is not only for LSQ-French, he can do other modes and codes, in respect with the individual's needs."*[31]

2.3. The Work of Interpreters

Interpreters work anywhere that communication between non-signing hearing individuals and Deaf people needs facilitation. The settings interpreters may find themselves in are extremely varied and encompass almost every situation imaginable. Typically, interpreters are employed either on a freelance basis as self-employed private contractors, or through organizations such as educational institutions, interpreter service agencies, or private companies.   Some choose to do a combination of both types of employment, as freelance work may not guarantee the amount or kind of employment desired. However, CQDA reports that in Québec the interpreter service agencies do not allow their interpreters to simultaneously engage in freelance work.[32]

The following summary diagrams show some of the places where interpreters work:

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[30] CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

[31] CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

[32] CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

Figure 2: Areas Where Interpreters Work[33]

Educational Field

Sectors:	children	youth	adults
Levels:	Preschool	Primary Secondary Vocational	Adult Education College University Professional [/vocational]

Social-Community Field

Health   Social Services   Work   Community Life   Law   Family   Financial Services

Hospitals	Social Aid	Businesses	Court: civil		Banks
CLSC*	DPJ**	Unions	criminal		Notaries
Clinics	CLSC*	Emploi Québec***	administrative		Insurance
Psychiatric Institutions			juvenile		
Private Offices			incarceration		

Gatherings
Sports and leisure associations
Advocacy Organizations

Links with school
Links with day-care

*Local Community Service Center (Health Services)
** Youth Protection Department
*** Government-run job site for work integration grants

Other than in Québec, the self-employed freelance interpreter often performs work referred to as "community interpreting," which usually encompasses legal, medical, mental health, religious,

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[33] Diagrams from UQAM Questionnaire Responses

educational, leisure, performing arts, and vocational settings. In actuality, community interpreting can involve an extensive array of situations from individual meetings (e.g. job interviews, doctor's appointments) to large group settings (e.g. school plays, church services). Some may choose to specialize in one area and develop their skill in, for example, legislative interpreting, while others may choose a variety of assignments in order to improve their overall skills and become adaptable to all situations. They can have contracts that last anywhere from one hour to several months, depending on the nature of the assignment and the people involved.[34]

The benefits for the freelance interpreter include greater autonomy over what types of assignments to choose and the flexibility of setting their own schedules. They can select assignments that match their interests and avoid those that are outside of their "comfort zones," leading to successful experiences. However, in areas where work is limited, freelance interpreters are at a disadvantage and may feel as though they need to accept any assignment that is available.

CQDA states that in Québec, the freelance interpreter takes on a different meaning as only the interpreter service agencies are responsible for community interpreting, such as legal, medical, mental health, health, social services, work, community life, etc. The funding for these interpreter services comes from government grants, and therefore Deaf individuals never have to pay for these services. Freelance interpreters are prohibited from working in these fields. Freelance interpreters in Québec, instead fulfill services for businesses, organizations, or individuals. They are independent interpreters often contracted directly by the Deaf consumer. According to the CQDA freelance interpreters are a problem due to the lack of a "guarantee of confidentiality, ethics, level of competence, quality, on-going training and just no place to complain about bad service."[35] It is not possible to determine whether freelance interpreters in Québec have the proper training or skill required as they are free to start working without evaluation.

Employed interpreters that work for educational institutions, interpreter service agencies, or corporations receive the benefit of steady employment and income, while releasing the autonomy of choosing their own assignments. Service agency interpreters also perform community interpreting, but usually do not have the luxury of selecting assignments that they are more interested in. However, an interpreter who has developed skill in one particular area will often be requested repeatedly for that area, giving them the opportunity to become specialized. Additionally, employed interpreters have more latitude to refuse an assignment that they may not feel qualified for or have ethical conflicts with due to the fact that the agency can reassign the job to another interpreter. Having other interpreters to fall back on and team with relieves the psychological stress that interpreters often feel regarding duty to their clients.[36]

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[34] Demers, Hubert. "*The Working Interpreter*." Topics in Signed Language Interpreting 2005. Pg. 206-207

[35] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[36] Demers, Hubert. "*The Working Interpreter*." Topics in Signed Language Interpreting 2005.*.* pg. 209-210

Some interpreter referral agencies provide Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) as part of their community services. Video Remote Interpreting is a form of interpretation, in which a remote interpreter is used to provide interpreting services for two or more individuals who are together in one location using video conferencing equipment. This type of interpretation often occurs when an in-person interpreter is unavailable due to geographical location, shortage of interpreters, etc. The interpreter is typically located at the service agency and provides interpretation services remotely with the use of a computer and web camera. The benefits of VRI include reduced travel time, ability to provide quality service to those in rural remote locations, and ability to offer 24 hour on demand services. [37]

Interpreters in the educational institutions are typically divided between those who work in K-12 and those in post-secondary education. These interpreters may have a classroom with many Deaf students or work individually with one Deaf student amongst hearing classmates. The latter is the more common situation, with that interpreter often being the only one employed by the school. The number of Deaf students in the school and in which classrooms they are located will determine the number of interpreters employed by the school. Even if the interpreters are located in different classrooms, the benefit of having a colleague to team with or at the very least discuss the work is often reported as beneficial for an interpreter's stress level.[38]

Post-secondary educational institutes tend to hire more than one interpreter, but the actual number of interpreters varies and is dependent on student enrolment. The interpreter may be a part time employee due to the nature of post-secondary education. Due to the diversity of programs and structure of post-secondary education, these institutions tend to have an interpreter coordination department on campus that handles the scheduling of interpretation services. This department can also serve as a resource centre for networking or providing the necessary materials (e.g. textbooks, course descriptions, etc.) needed for successful interpretation in this environment. Unfortunately, much is reported about the quality of interpreters in the educational setting not being up to par. For instance, in rural areas and in the K-12 setting, services are often still being provided by volunteers who are not trained in the process of interpreting, but know enough sign language to assist.[39] The following comments from the Canadian Association of the Deaf reiterate this point.

> *"We do not consider family, friends, acquaintances, social workers, teachers, educational assistants, ministers, or others to be either qualified or professional interpreters... The CAD is very concerned about the apparent lack of standards or minimal requirements for educational interpreters. It has often been said that interpreters who are not very skilful*

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[37] http://signonasl.com/vri.html

[38] Demers, Hubert. *"The Working Interpreter."* Topics in Signed Language Interpreting 2005. pg. 209-210

[39] Gordon, M.G. and Hardy, M. *Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and Interpreter Education in BC*, Dec 2009, pg. 4. www.cacuss.ca/content/documents/Link/CADSPPE_Resources/ASL_Deaf_Studies_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

go into educational interpreting, if only for the chance to gain experience and confidence."[40]

The educational sector seems to exacerbate this problem by typically paying their interpreters less than what other sectors of community interpreting pay.[41] CQDA also states,

"In Québec, K-11 School Board[s] have no evaluation system whatsoever to hire interpreters and some just don't qualify for the job even though working with children and teens. CQDA has been discussing this for years with the Education departments in order to find a way of introducing better qualified interpreters in elementary and high schools.

Schools have an obligation to offer interpreting services and in their mind, a bad interpreter is better than no interpreter. In some cases, the School boards don't have a clue about different types of interpreters and hire, to abide to the law, an interpreter that does not answer the need of the Deaf individual.

Also, freelance interpreters (all languages, modes and codes) are often hired by Deaf individuals for vocational or adult education through a bursary from the Québec Education Department. Deaf consumers then become employer. Interpreters sometime suffer delays in payments, aren't fully paid or are not paid at all. They sometimes quit before the end of the year. Deaf students don't always understand their responsibilities as employers, etc. The interpreter has no weight whatsoever in his work conditions, the school not being responsible for giving him a good chair, a secure environment of work, etc."

Some corporations that have Deaf employees or frequent contact with the Deaf community may choose to hire their own staff interpreters; however this practice is rare as most choose to contract interpreters from an agency for this type of work. Lastly, many ASL-English interpreters choose to work in the video relay services environment, which is unique in that it offers permanent employment and fixed hours. The differences between video relay interpreting and community interpreting are many and have significant impact on the process in which interpreters approach their work. A summary of these differences follow in subsequent sections.

The environment an interpreter chooses to work in is based on many different factors and most elect to incorporate a combination of the different types of work. These decisions are related to the availability of assignments and the current interest and schedule of the interpreter at the time. In addition, much consideration is given to matching the consumer and interpreter based on compatibility[42] and skill level.

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[40]Canadian Association of the Deaf's Position Paper on Interpreting, at http://www.cad.ca/interpreting.php

[41] Mission Consulting interviews with interpreter organizations.

[42] Many Deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened or deaf blind consumers have different communication preferences,
[footnote continues on next page]

2.4. The Community Interpreting Process

Regardless of the type of community work an interpreter chooses there are steps that can be taken to ensure successful engagements. Several models of interpreting exist and focus on the cognitive processes involved and how to improve those processes. Hubert Demers, in "The Working Interpreter" from *Topics in Sign Language Interpreting,* identifies eight essential steps[43] that lead to accurate and successful interpretations. These steps vary depending on setting and how much time can be allotted to each step, especially in relation to the VRS work setting. In fact, many of these steps are simply not feasible for the VRS setting and become important considerations related to the significant difference between traditional interpreting and VRS interpreting.

STEP 1 THE INITIAL CONTACT

During this step the interpreter must make a professional assessment of their availability and an ethical determination of their ability to handle the assignment. At this initial contact the interpreter should have enough information regarding the assignment to determine whether to proceed.

STEP 2 GATHERING PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Once availability is determined the interpreter will need to gain additional insight into the nature of the assignment, such as level of knowledge needed and level of language proficiency. This information is usually obtained by asking additional questions to the person contracting the service. The best approach is to determine the setting (e.g. medical, legal, education, etc.), which triggers the interpreter's schema related to those settings and allows him/her to best assess their qualifications. Their schema usually is based on previous experiences and protocols for generalized situations; the more experience an interpreter has, the more adapted their schema is to specific situations.

STEP 3 ACCEPTING OR DENYING

Now that the interpreter has determined the nature of the assignment and has gathered enough background information to determine their own suitability; they can either accept or reject the assignment. If preliminary information was sparse or inadequate to make a determination, the interpreter relies on experience; hence an interpreter with extensive experience has an advantage. Inexperienced interpreters may not have the ability to assess the appropriateness of their skills for the task, but an experienced one will have strategies and more detailed schemas from which to make that determination.

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which need to be considered when matching them to an interpreter. See Phase 3 Consumers.

[43] Demers, Hubert. *"The Working Interpreter." Topics in Signed Language Interpreting* 2005*.* pg. 211-220

STEP 4 OFF-SITE PREPARATION

Preparation is paramount for successful interpretation; therefore during this step the interpreter can request additional assignment information, such as agendas, copies of presentations, documents, anything that allows the interpreter to get more knowledge about the topic. This step helps the interpreter to modify their schema to a more precise expectation of what will likely occur. Additional avenues are to research publically the topics or participants in order to become familiar with the terminology that will be used.

STEP 5 ARRIVING AT THE ASSIGNMENT

This step involves the actual logistics of getting to the assignment including time allotment, directions, parking, and other physical considerations.

STEP 6 ON-SITE PREPARATION

Once the interpreter has arrived and has the opportunity to meet the participant, there may be a need to be debriefed on any additions to the agenda or changes to the specifics of the communication. Information that may not have been previously obtained is now assimilated into the interpreter's schema. Decisions regarding where to stand or sit are now made with regard to lighting considerations, location of participants, microphone placement, etc., often at the direction of the Deaf client.

STEP 7 FACILITATING THE INTERACTION

Every interpreting assignment is unique, regardless of the amount of preparation time or previous experience the interpreter has with the particular situation. This step is where the actual communication facilitation begins, but as noted all the previous steps leading to this one are key elements for success. The communication must include not only the words being communicated, but the meaning behind the words. The interpreter strives for "dynamic equivalence," which is broadly defined as maintaining the chemistry between the speaker and the recipients. Much consideration must be given to the overall purpose of the communication and what the speaker's goals are.

STEP 8 REFLECTING AND DEBRIEFING

Reflecting on the assignment allows the interpreter to identify areas that were successful and those that need more development professionally. Areas that were not understood may come to mind after the fact and the interpreter must decide whether to inform the participants of the errors potentially made in the communication. Sometimes, interpreters will have the opportunity to work with the same participants and can choose to tell them then. Debriefing may be necessary if the subject or assignment was particularly taxing emotionally. When confidentiality is not a factor, it may help the interpreter to discuss the assignment with colleagues to gain emotional support.

2.5. Interpreting in the VRS Environment

With the advent of video technology and video relay services, sign language interpreters have opportunities to work more consistent hours at one location, and many times obtain positions that provide employment benefits. The VRS industry has grown exponentially in the U.S. since its initiation, given this current rate of growth, VRS will continue to be a practical place for interpreters to seek employment. [44]

This unique form of interpreting creates a challenging task of remotely interpreting calls through an Internet-based video device. This is the most obvious distinction from traditional interpreting as the interpretation is done exclusively over the two-dimensional video medium. The technology is now an added factor affecting the success of the interpretation. For example, depending on Internet connection speeds and other technical factors, the transmission may be very clear on one end, but significantly unclear on the other. The transmission may begin clearly, and then deteriorate during the session. All of these factors interfere with the interpretation and interrupt the flow of conversation. Another major distinction between traditional and video relay interpreting is the increased need for multi-tasking. Interpreters are constantly multi-tasking as they perform complex mental and physical processes; VRS interpreters have the added component of having to operate highly technical equipment and software to receive and place calls for the VRS consumers. This technological component often requires additional training and increased hand-eye coordination. Interpreting and operating technological equipment both rely on the use of one's hands, which compounds the physical strains interpreters face when performing their work.[45]

Several differences exist between this unique setting and that of traditional interpreting, which creates additional considerations for the training of interpreters, as well as the skills required to provide successful interpretations. Traditional abilities to prepare for an assignment are virtually non-existent and other strategies must be learned and utilized to adapt to these unique challenges of VRS interpreting. In fact, of the 8 steps discussed above for community interpreting, only step 7 exists in the VRS environment. The lack of the preparation steps also represents significant challenges to effective communication in the VRS environment.

The following table describes many of the additional differences between community and VRS interpreting.

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[44] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf; *Video Relay Service Interpreting Standard Practice Paper;(*RID 2007), at http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Drafts_June_2006/VRS_SPP.pdf

[45] Taylor, Marty. *Video Relay Services Interpreting Task Analysis Report,* 2005, Pg 8, at http://www.unco.edu/doit/articles/VRS%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf

Table 3: Traditional Interpreting vs. VRS Interpreting[46]

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING	VRS INTERPRETING
Live in-person communication	No live in-person contact; all through video medium
Three-dimensional perspective	Two-dimensional perspective
No physical limitation on signing space (area where signing occurs)	Restricted signing space due to video camera limitation
Relationship between parties is commonly known (e.g. doctor/patient, employer/employee)	Relationship between callers is often unknown
Sociolinguistic factors (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity) are overt	Sociolinguistic factors are not always known
Assignments are made in advance	"Immediate" assignments
Ability to accept or turn down assignments (e.g. legal or medical interpreting)[47]	Must accept all calls regardless of content or caller (e.g. young children, new immigrant with limited signing abilities, computer experts)
Potential for extensive preparation	Relies on prior experiences, not preparation
Generally works alone or with one other interpreter	Team environment
Often self-employed[48]	Works for a corporation
Interpretation is the only role	Multiple roles occur simultaneously (e.g. operator, customer service representative)
One location with a relatively limited and predictable number of consumers (e.g. number of "jobs" in a day range from 1 to 5)	Wide variety of callers and content (e.g. number of calls in a day can be over 100)

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[46] Ibid Pg. 9

[47] According to CQDA, full-time interpreters in Quebec may not refuse assignments from agencies, only on-call and freelance interpreters can. CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

[48] According to CQDA, freelance interpreters are a minority in Quebec (approximately 20%). CQDA correspondence 07/05/2011

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING	VRS INTERPRETING
Often regional signs are known (e.g. specific place names, cities, names of sports teams, etc.)	Often regional signs are unknown
Consumers see each other and are able to monitor reactions visually and aurally	Deaf and hearing parties are not able to see or hear each other or monitor reactions
Dual-tasking at linguistic and physical levels	Multi-tasking at linguistic, physical, and mechanical levels
Generally greater demand for spoken to signed language interpreting	Greater demand for signed language to spoken language interpreting
Most consumers have experience using interpreters	Many callers are inexperienced with interpreters and also are inexperienced with relay
Uses contextual and environmental cues to convey meaning	Contextual/environmental support cues are lacking
No special need for technological competence	Technology competence is a necessary skill
Very little use of intimate register, more formal or professional registers are used	High number of calls requiring the use of intimate register(e.g. husband to wife)

As previously stated, in traditional interpreting much consideration is given to matching the consumer and interpreter based on several factors, including communication preferences, gender, expertise, etc. These considerations are not feasible in the typical VRS environment due to the lack of prior knowledge between consumer and interpreter. The calls come in and the next available interpreter handles the call, regardless of whether the consumer and interpreter are well matched. This situation often results in the interpreter either transferring the call to another interpreter or utilizing the assistance of a Deaf interpreter, or the Deaf consumer disconnecting and reconnecting until they find an interpreter they like. This practice is referred to as "fishing" and happens when Deaf callers connect to VRS, evaluate the interpreter and if not confident in their skills, they disconnect and reconnect to evaluate once again.[49]

The advent of VRS has vast implications for the interpreting profession. Many of the above variances need to be addressed in interpreter training programs and standards would be useful in determining who is competent to work in such a diverse environment. In Canada, several interpreting professional groups and training programs surveyed reiterated this point by stating that at minimum, graduation

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[49]Mission Consulting Interview with BC-VRS Committee.

from a recognized interpreter training program plus some community experience would qualify an interpreter to work in this setting.[50]

3. Professional Interpreter Organizations

Included in this research, the national professional organization, Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) and provincial affiliate chapters were contacted to elicit their views on VRS and potential deployment in Canada. Several representatives of interpreter referral agencies throughout Canada were also contacted. The information gathered from these entities is related to estimated labour pools, employment wages, current availability of interpreters for community needs, and perspectives on VRS for Canada. Also included in this section are interpreter qualifications, specifically certification and evaluation methods utilized in Canada for the purpose of accrediting the profession.

3.1. Certification, Accreditation, and Evaluation Procedures

3.1.1. ASL-English

In Canada, the evaluation of ASL-English interpreters is carried out by the national interpreter professional organization, AVLIC. AVLIC was incorporated in 1979 and has several affiliate chapters across the country. AVLIC is the only certifying body for ASL-English interpreters in Canada and utilizes the Canadian Evaluation System (CES). AVLIC created the CES in an effort to create a system that standardizes the quality of ASL-English interpretation services in Canada. The CES is a four-step sequential testing system that incorporates preparation assistance and awards the Certificate of Interpretation (COI) upon completion of all four sections. The COI is the only certification in ASL-English interpretation that is recognized by all provinces in Canada.[51] AVLIC does not evaluate LSQ-French interpreters.

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[50] Mission Consulting interviews and questionnaire responses. See Appendix A.

[51] http://www.avlic.ca/

	Canadian Evaluation System (CES)
Phase One:	**Written Test of Knowledge** • 75 multiple choice test on AVLIC and affiliate organizations, profession of interpreting, language and culture • Must score at least 70% to advance to next phase • Offered twice a year in June and November
Phase Two	**Preparation** • Assists test takers by providing a foundation for the Test of Interpretation (TOI) • Two mandatory workshops (interpreting narratives and interpreting interactive interviews) • Feedback and diagnostics given on videotaped sample interpreting submissions
Phase Three	**Test of Interpretation (TOI)** • Verifies whether an individual is at or above the standard for message equivalence between English and ASL (offered once a year) • Includes several samples of dialogue and narrative discourse of a generalist nature and various ASL contact varieties • Performances are videotaped and reviewed by raters to determine competency
Phase Four	**Certification Maintenance** • After successful achievement of the COI the individual must maintain active membership with fees paid in full with AVLIC and adhere to the code of ethics. • Documentation of continuing professional development activities (workshops, continuing education, and experience) must be submitted annually.

3.1.2. LSQ-French

From 1982 to 2004 the Association Québecoise des Interpreters Francophones en Language Visuel (AQIFLV) evaluated the skills of LSQ-French interpreters and oral interpreters. AQIFLV utilized a three level evaluation system:

1. Junior (one-on-one settings)

2. Intermediate (meetings)

3. Senior (conferences)

Certification in one of these levels was used by LSQ-French interpreters as proof of qualification to work for various employers (e.g. interpreter agencies, colleges, etc.) Furthermore, these three levels have become the provincial standard and although AQIFLV no longer exists, these levels are often used as in-house evaluation methods by the interpreting service agencies. Salaries for LSQ-French interpreters are also often based on these classifications. Some of these agencies also make use of AQIFLV's code of ethics as a basis for their own ethical code of practice.[52]

Interpreters working in Québec do not presently have a universal standard for an interpreter evaluation system for LSQ-French interpretation. Instead, different tests specific to each field are administered internally by each organization. The types of evaluation procedures used for LSQ-French interpreters in Québec are summarized in the Table 5 below.

Table 5: Evaluation of LSQ-French Interpreters in Québec53

Field	Evaluation of LSQ-French Interpreters in Québec
Social/Community	• Regional Interpreting services have different in-house methods • Some make use of a junior, intermediate, senior classification with the applicant choosing which level to test at
Academics	**Primary and Secondary Level Education** • No uniform evaluation procedure • Majority of interpreters are not evaluated **Professional Training/Adult Education** • No uniform evaluation **Higher Education/CÉGEPs** • Internal evaluation procedure with no category distinction
Private Sector	• No evaluation unless working for Federal Government Translation Bureau • Order of Recognized Translators, Terminologists, and Interpreters of Québec (OTTIAQ) has acknowledged within its classification 2 LSQ-French interpreters [54]

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[52] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[53] Questionnaire responses from UQAM.

[54] These recognized individuals are considered high-level professionals with accredited background experience in LSQ-French. Other applications are under review.

The lack of a uniform evaluation for LSQ-French interpreters leads to a situation where less qualified individuals who have not studied the complex process of interpreting are providing services. According to the CQDA, this is a problem that has been occurring since the inception of professional interpreting in Québec.[55] Interpreters in Québec have expressed desire for an obligatory evaluation procedure for all working interpreters in the Province. This evaluation should be directed by a professional or technical organization and administered by a committee composed of professional interpreters and Deaf consumers.[56]

3.1.3. United States Certification and Alternatives to AVLIC Certification

Some Canadian interpreters are certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in the U.S., which allows them to refer to themselves as certified interpreters. Some members of the Canadian interpreting community contacted for this study have expressed mixed feelings regarding this practice and would prefer those interpreters use the word "registered" instead of "certified", since certification means something different for Canadian interpreters.[57]

In the United States certification is administered through RID, which offers certification in three levels and has a similar testing structure to AVLIC's COI. The current National Interpreter Certification (NIC) testing procedures are considered to be the most current and appropriate assessment for interpreters in the U.S. The NIC exam tests interpreting skills and knowledge in three critical domains:

1. General knowledge of the field of interpreting through the NIC Knowledge exam,

2. Ethical decision making through the interview portion of the NIC Performance test, and

3. Interpreting and transliterating skills through the performance portion of the test.

In all three areas, individuals must demonstrate professional knowledge and skills that meet or exceed the minimum professional standards necessary to perform in a broad range of interpretation and transliteration assignments.[58] Depending on the test results the following classifications[59] are awarded upon successful completion:

- **NIC**
  Individuals who achieve the NIC level have passed the NIC Knowledge exam. They have also scored within the standard range of a professional interpreter on the interview and performance portions of the test.

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[55] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011.

[56] Parisot, Anne-Marie & Villeneuve, Suzanne, et al. *L'Interpretation Visuelle Aupres D'une Clientele Sourde. Portrait d'Une Profession et Etat de la Situation Sur Les Besoins de Formation.* 2008. Pg 54.

[57] Mission Consulting interviews with Douglas College, George Brown College, Ontario Interpreting Services.

[58] http://www.rid.org/education/edu_certification/index.cfm

[59] Ibid.

- **NIC Advanced**
  Individuals who achieved the NIC Advanced level have passed the NIC Knowledge exam; scored within the standard range of a professional interpreter on the interview portion; and scored within the high range on the performance portion of the test.

- **NIC Master**
  Individuals who achieved the NIC Master level have passed the NIC Knowledge exam. They have scored within the high range of a professional interpreter on both the interview and performance portions of the test.

The NIC replaces previous certifications that are no longer offered by RID, but are still accepted as qualification to work. Previous RID certifications include the following:

- CI (Certificate of Interpretation)
- CT (Certificate of Transliteration)
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Certifications:
  - NAD III Generalist
  - NAD IV Advanced
  - NAD V Master

All certifications require continued education units to maintain accreditation.

According to interviews, the average time it takes to acquire an appropriate skill level for certification in Canada can range between five to ten years after graduation from a recognized interpreter training program; as such, it has been stated that the COI is considered superior to the U.S. certification. However, the number of individuals achieving the COI is low, making up only 9% of ASL/English AVLIC active members.[60] This could be due to several factors including the cost of preparing for the test, the substantial amount of time required to gain experience, as well as the apparent infrequence of employers to require the COI.

Alternatives to the COI are often administered at the provincial level by private or government interpreter service agencies throughout Canada. For example, in Ontario, an interpreter who wishes to work for Ontario Interpreting Services (a branch of the Canadian Hearing Society that offers fee-for-service interpreting) can apply to become OIS registered. OIS registration requires an individual to complete a videotaped skills assessment and participate in a panel interview. LSQ-French interpreters are not required to take the video skills screening and instead must show proof of designation as a junior, intermediate, or senior interpreter from an LSQ-French screening committee in Québec. If the interpreter is successful they may refer to themselves as OIS registered and are eligible to work for OIS and be placed on the freelance list.[61] Additionally, the Public Works and Government Services Canada administers a screening process to ASL-English and LSQ-French interpreters, which allows them to work

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[60] Questionnaire responses from AVLIC.

[61] Mission Consulting Interviews with OIS staff.

in federal government venues. The screening consists of both a written test and videotaped skilled assessment. Interpreters who pass this screening are referred to as Registered Linguistic Service Suppliers and can submit bids to the Translation Bureau, which is responsible for coordinating interpreting services for federal government employees.[62] Several interpreting services in Québec make use of an external or in-house evaluation committee to ensure qualification of the interpreters hired. An evaluation is required for each of the three levels offered by the service agency (junior, intermediate, and senior). It is up to the individual taking the test which level they would like to test for. A document is issued at the end of the evaluation stating whether the candidate was successful or not.[63] Other examples include the medical interpreting screening and post-secondary screening both offered in Vancouver by the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In some instances where specific screening procedures may not be in place, a solution to determining whether an interpreter has basic qualifications is to require proof of active membership with AVLIC. The criteria for AVLIC active membership is graduation from a recognized ASL-English Interpreting Program (AEIP), or for student members, current enrollment. This helps to ensure that an individual has at minimum completed training in the process of interpreting and is qualified to work at a basic entry level. AVLIC also recognizes Deaf interpreters, but no certification currently exists. AVLIC's membership criterion for Deaf interpreters includes:

- A letter of support from a Provincial Deaf Organization or Association
- A letter of support from a COI interpreter or AVLIC Affiliate Chapter
- A mixture of 40 documented hours of work as a Deaf Interpreter and professional development[64]

Since LSQ-French interpreters do not have the same opportunities as ASL-English interpreters to earn a diploma or degree in interpreting, AVLIC has created the following membership criteria:[65]

- Two letters of support from Deaf community members
- Two letters of support from Active AVLIC members
- Current resume
- Updated list of professional development workshops and opportunities attended
- Any additional documentation to support the application (e.g. LSQ assessment tests, documentation demonstrating understanding and compliance to the AVLIC Code of Ethics & Guidelines for Professional Conduct, etc.)

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[62] http://www.oasli.on.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=7

[63] Questionnaire Responses from SIVET.

[64] http://www.avlic.ca/

[65] AVLIC email correspondance 05/11/2011

However, the incentive for LSQ-French interpreters to join AVLIC is low, due to AVLIC's focus on ASL-English especially in the area of professional development opportunities. Many LSQ-French interpreters are reported to have difficulty reconciling the cost of membership to the actual benefit received from membership.[66] CQDA states:

> "Being a member of AVLIC does not give any advantage to LSQ-French interpreters in Québec, neither in getting hired nor in getting better pay…CQDA is against requiring AVLIC membership since this membership gave absolutely no guarantee to Deaf LSQ consumers about quality, ethics, and experience of AVLIC LSQ interpreter."[67]

All interpreter referral agencies contacted and researched for this study indicated using screening procedures when hiring interpreters or when allowing them to be placed on their freelance lists.

Despite the efforts of the profession to set universal standards, many individuals who have not completed formal training in interpretation are working in the community as freelance interpreters. This is of special concern in Québec because no provincial certification for LSQ -French interpreters exists and many individuals are reported to be working as freelance interpreters without proper training, particularly in the education sector.[68]

In regard to VRS work, VRS providers should work with AVLIC and local agencies in order to verify the qualifications of their interpreters. Currently the minimum qualifications required for Canadian ASL-English interpreters to work in VRS[69] are:

- High School Diploma or equivalent;
- Must be active member of AVLIC in good standing;
- 3+ consistent years working as a certified sign language interpreter in a variety of settings;
- AVLIC COI, NAD level IV/V; or a RID CI, CT, CI/CT, CSC; or NIC, NIC Advanced, NIC Master; or hold a provincial interpreter screening or have the professional interpreting experience to become a Sorenson VRS interpreter, subject to skill set verification and screening.

3.2. Estimated Number of Interpreters

Because many interpreters choose to work as independent freelance contractors and may or may not be members of AVLIC, obtaining an accurate number of qualified interpreters is complicated. According to

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[66] Suzanne Villeneuve (UQAM) email correspondance 04/21/2011

[67] CQDA Correspondance 07/05/2011

[68] Mission Consulting interview Suzanne Villeneuve, Natalie Baril 04/16/2011

[69] At Sorenson call centres in Canada, either through the Telus trial or at call centres serving the U.S. See https://www4.ultirecruit.com/SOR1000/jobboard/JobDetails.aspx?__ID=455

AVLIC an accurate estimate for ASL-English interpreters can be determined from their membership, but not for the number of LSQ-French interpreters.

As of April 30th 2011 AVLIC reports having[70]:

Table 6: AVLIC Membership April 30th 2011

AVLIC Membership as of April 30th 2011	
Active ASL-English	599
Active LSQ-French	4
Active Deaf Interpreters	24
Students[71]	77
Total	704

Figure 3: AVLIC Membership April 30th 2011

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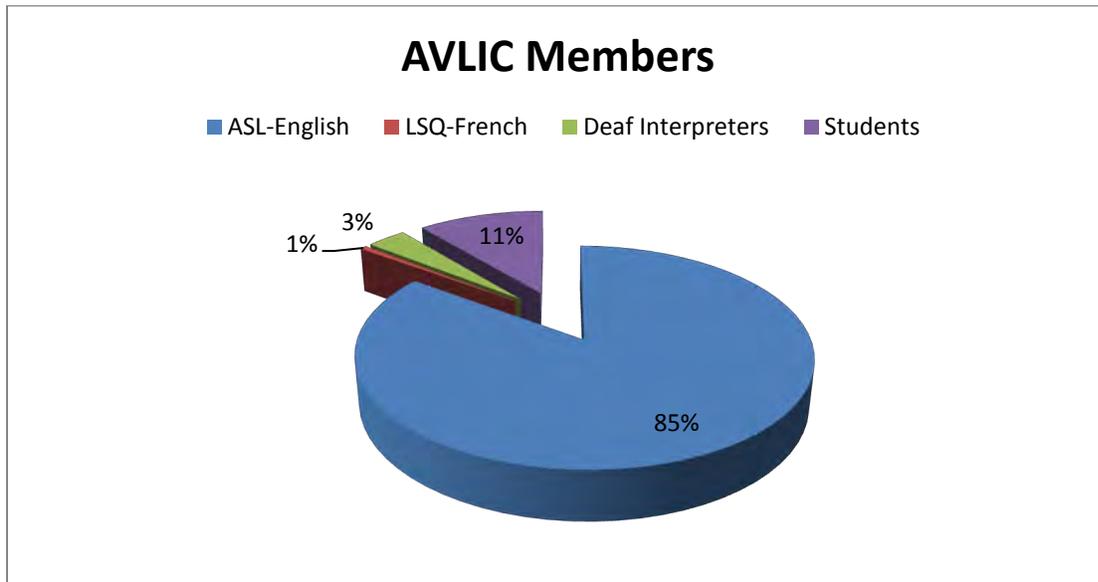
[70] AVLIC email correspondence 05/12/2011

[71] Student members are those currently enrolled in one of five ASL-English Canadian training programs.

As of summer 2010, Sorenson employs approximately 225 AVLIC ASL-English interpreters for VRS. It is possible that Sorenson currently employs non AVLIC members, because the criteria for AVLIC membership was added later and any interpreters hired before that time are still allowed to work at Sorenson.[72] How many of these 225 VRS interpreters are serving the U.S., or are involved in the Telus-Sorenson trial in B.C. and Alberta serving Canada[73] was not disclosed.

Due to the lack of an official compulsory national or provincial certification, accurate numbers of qualified LSQ-French interpreters are difficult to quantify. However, some current estimates place the number of LSQ-French interpreters slightly below 300,[74] or approximately 265.[75] A comprehensive study of the status of visual interpreting in Québec was conducted in 2008 resulting in an estimated number of interpreters at between 250 and 300 individuals. This study identified 263 interpreters working in Québec.[76] A better picture of the actual number of LSQ-French interpreters comes from this data, which analyzed the working languages of the 263 respondents, however only 243 responded appropriately to this particular question. Those who only mastered French are representative of oral interpreters that do not perform in LSQ. The respondents are dispersed across Québec with the majority of oral interpreters concentrated in Québec City, Montréal, Saguenay, Abitibi, and Chaudiere-Appalaches.[77] The lack of a universal standard for evaluating and "certifying" LSQ-French interpreters, as well as the inclusion of oral interpreters, creates further ambiguity regarding the true number of visual language interpreters.

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[72] Confidential correspondence with Canadian interpreter organizations.

[73] Sorenson only provides ASL-English interpreting services in Canada.

[74] Villeneuve, Suzanne, *La Langue Comme Outil de Prévention des Troubles Musclo-Squelettiques Chez des Interprètes Français/ Langue des Signes Québécoise: Analyse d'Aménagements Linguistiques, Biomécaniques et Temporels*, Décembre 2006. Pg. 29.

[75] Industry Canada, *Community Interpreting in Canada.* April 2007. Pg. 45

http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/471.pdf

[76] Parisot, Anne-Marie & Villeneuve, Suzanne, et al. *L'Interpretation Visuelle Aupres D'une Clientele Sourde. Portrait d'Une Profession et Etat de la Situation Sur Les Besoins de Formation.* 2008. Pg 33

[77] Ibid pg 36.

Figure 4: Working Languages of Québec Interpreters Surveyed

Primary Working Languages of Interpreters Surveyed

- LSQ-French
- French only

25%

75%
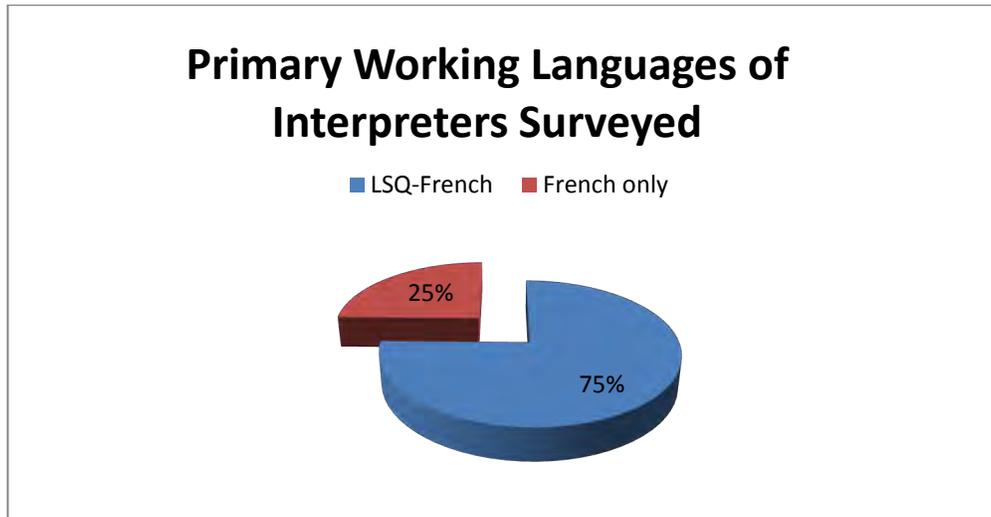
Table 7: Estimated Number of Interpreters in Québec

Estimated Number of LSQ-French and Oral Interpreters in Québec	
LSQ-French Interpreters	183
Oral Interpreters	60
No answer[78]	20
Total	263

Accurate information regarding the interpreter labour pool and forecasted growth are difficult to ascertain due to several mitigating factors. In the area of growth one can look to the number of graduating students[79] to estimate how many individuals are entering the profession, but more difficult to determine is the rate of turnover in the profession. Issues that affect the retention of interpreters include health issues (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome, musculoskeletal issues, and tendinitis), psychological stressors, and general burnout and exhaustion. Several interpreter organizations interviewed and surveyed expressed concern over these issues and recommend VRS providers be cognizant of these

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[78] Provided more than one answer to the question.

[79] See Table 10 Annual Enrolment Capacity and Average Size of Graduating Classes.

issues and include strategies to reduce their incidence. Extensive research has been conducted on the factors leading to interpreter burnout and would need to be included in a more detailed contract for VRS services, but for the purposes of this study these factors are mentioned to demonstrate the challenges of the profession to sustain a labour pool large enough to satisfy the growing demands of Deaf consumers.

Additionally the CQDA states, in Québec a lack of full–time positions exists, which makes it difficult for interpreters to sustain an adequate income. CQDA reports the following information regarding retention issues:

> *"In Québec, one of the retention problems is lack of full-time jobs within the interpreter agencies. Many on-call interpreters need to have another job, either interpreting or not, to make a decent living. Some just leave for a full-time job in schools, colleges, or universities, become freelance or just quit interpreting. Also, the student must move from their hometown for many years, find a job in Montreal and a place to live while going through a training that usually takes more than two years."*[80]

3.2.1.   Pay Ranges

The range of pay for visual interpreters varies across regions and is commensurate with the experience of the interpreter. Another factor affecting pay is where the work takes place with the education sector typically paying less. Questionnaire responses from interpreter organizations across Canada have provided the following summary of pay scales.

Table 8: Regional Pay Ranges

Organization	Location	Range of Pay CAD
Red River College	Winnipeg, Manitoba	$19 – 40
Nova Scotia Community College	Dartmouth, Nova Scotia	$17 – 50
George Brown College	Toronto, Ontario	$40 – 45
Ontario Interpreting Services	Toronto, Ontario	$40 – 45[81]
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society	Calgary, Alberta	$28 – 50

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[80] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[81] $40 for OIS registered and $45 for AVLIC COI.

Organization	Location	Range of Pay CAD
Association of Sign Language Interpreters Alberta (ASLIA)	Edmonton, Alberta	$25 - 65
Douglas College	Vancouver, British Columbia	$30 – 60
Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI)	Vancouver, British Columbia	$35 – 50
Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	$18-30
Service d'interprétation visuelle et tactile (SIVET)	Montréal, Laval, Montérégie, Québec	$14.67 Junior $18.53 Intermediate 23.15 Senior
Service régional d'interprétariat de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (SRIAT)	Abitibi-Temiscamingue, Québec	$15 Junior $20 Intermediate $25 Senior
Service d'interprétation pour personnes sourdes de l'Estrie (SIPSE)	Eastern Townships, Québec	$19.28 Junior $25.68 Intermediate $32.10 Senior
Service régional d'interprétariat de Lanaudière (SRIL)	Lanaudière, Québec	$15 – 35
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal – service d'aide à l'intégration des élèves (SAIDE)	Western Québec	$19.40 – 27.63
Range Across all Regions		$15 -60

The preceding pay scales are affected by several factors including region, experience, certification (e.g. COI or junior, intermediate, senior classification), setting and complexity of assignments. Many organizations reported that the education sector tends to pay interpreters on the lower end of the scale,

while the high end is reserved for those holding AVLIC certification or senior status combined with extensive experience.[82]

3.2.2.   Availability of Interpreters for Community Work

Professional interpreter organizations surveyed all report that there is a shortage of interpreters for community work, particularly in non-metropolitan areas. However, all claim to have strategies in place that result in very few interpreting requests going unfilled.

> *"In Ottawa we have found that working together and sharing the work has generated a beneficial side effect – more interpreting assignments are filled than would happen if interpreters work in isolation from each other. We can say, with confidence, that very few requests go unfilled, which is something we are proud of. This is a win-win outcome for the Deaf and interpreter communities in Ottawa."[83]*

Consumer organizations surveyed for this study contradicted in part the above statement, reporting significant difficulties in obtaining interpreters.

Regional interpreting services in Québec, also often work together to ensure that requests do not go unfilled. Interpreters from one agency are often lent to another agency to fulfill requests.[84]

The following table shows the monthly percentage of the average number of hours filled as reported by each agency surveyed.

Table 9: Percentage of Monthly Interpreting Requests Filled

Organization	Location	Monthly Hours Filled	Monthly Percentage Filled
Service d'interprétation visuelle et tactile (SIVET)	Montréal, Laval, Montérégie, Québec	1400	95%
Service régional d'interprétariat de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (SRIAT)	Abitibi-Temiscamingue, Québec	102	100%

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[82] Mission Consulting Interviews and Questionnaire Responses. See Appendix A

[83] Wilson, Christine. *A View of Ottawa's Approach to Supply and Demand,* 2009. Pg. 11, at http://www.avlic.ca/files/pdf/newsletters/2009_avlic_winter_spring.pdf

[84] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

Organization	Location	Monthly Hours Filled	Monthly Percentage Filled
Service d'interprétation pour personnes sourdes de l'Estrie (SIPSE)	Eastern Townships, Québec	NA	99%
Service régional d'interprétariat de Lanaudière (SRIL)	Lanaudière, Québec	NA	95%
Service régional d'interprétariat de l'Est du Québec (SRIEQ)	Eastern Québec	NA	90%
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal – service d'aide à l'intégration des élèves (SAIDE)	Western Québec	2500	100%
Ontario Interpreting Services	Toronto, Ontario	2960	90%
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society	Calgary, Alberta	900	92%
Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	250	96%
Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians	Nova Scotia	500	95%

Agencies also report that in the cases where a request goes unfilled the reason is usually due to the last minute timing of the request. The ability of these agencies to maintain high percentages in spite of a shortage of interpreters is impressive and especially so for Québec, which has the greatest shortage of interpreters. Agencies state that in order to continue this level of service if VRS is implemented, they would need to work in close collaboration with the VRS providers.

3.2.3. Availability of ASL and LSQ Interpreters for Canadian VRS

Accurate statistics on the Canadian Deaf population are historically difficult to obtain, as is trying to discover how many of these individuals use signed language as their primary form of communication. Canadian Association of the Deaf provides the information below:

"It is the opinion of the Canadian Association of the Deaf that <u>no fully credible census of Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing people has ever been conducted in Canada.</u>

So, what statistic does the CAD cite when asked how many Deaf people live in Canada? We continue to follow the standard comparison model between Canada and the United States, which assumes that statistics for Canada will be one-tenth of statistics for the U.S. (based on the fact that Canada has one-tenth the population of the U.S.) By this measure, Canada in the year 2006 would have roughly 3.1 million people with some degree of hearing loss. Of those 3.1 million people, one-tenth or roughly 310,000 would be culturally and linguistically Deaf."[85]

Culturally and linguistically Deaf implies that these 310,000 individuals use signed language as their primary form of communication and therefore are potential VRS users.

The most current census of Canada[86] from 2010 identifies a total population of approximately 34.1 million people. Using the CAD's calculation the number of potential VRS users in 2010 was 340,000. Québec's population is 7.9 million[87], which accounts for about 23% of the total population. Using this percentage, one can postulate the number of culturally Deaf LSQ users in Québec at approximately 78,200. The CQDA believes that the number is close to 7,500 and other reports state the number of LSQ users in Québec between 2000 and 7000.[88] However, this is not a full assessment of LSQ users as they are not exclusive to Québec but are found throughout Canada. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the number of potential users[89] far exceeds the number of available interpreters.

The number of estimated interpreters needed to support potential VRS users will be analyzed further in this study's phase 9, User Demand.

3.3. Perspectives on VRS

A number of themes emerged from interpreter organizations surveyed pertaining to VRS for Canada and are summarized in this section.

3.3.1. Working Conditions

- Consideration of repetitive strain injuries/musculoskeletal injuries (e.g. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome) and prevention strategies

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[85] Canadian Association of the Deaf's Position Paper on Statistics.

http://www.cad.ca/statistics_on_deaf_canadians.php

[86] http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo02a-eng.htm

[87] Ibid

[88] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[89] I.e., Market base X percentage of potential users

- Appropriate rest and break times for VRS interpreters
- Ergonomic considerations
- Training and prevention related to vicarious trauma[90]
- Requirement to interpret sensitive, controversial or offensive conversations (e.g. swearing, intimate language, etc.)
- Clear protocols about controlling conversations (e.g., telling the person being called that this a VRS call)

3.3.2. Community Education and Outreach

Organizations report community education will definitely be necessary and should be provided to all users of Video Relay Services including Deaf and hearing individuals. This includes all the places and institutions VRS users are likely to call. AVLIC states that education is particularly important to understand the use of the equipment, the intricacies of interpreter's work, and what VRS does or does not include. For example, VRS should not be used as a replacement for situations where in-person interpreting would be superior (e.g. mental health). With reference to who should provide the training, respondents report that the VRS provider should be responsible.

3.3.3. Use of U.S. Interpreters for VRS

All organizations surveyed were asked whether VRS call centres located in the U.S. should be allowed to serve Canada. Common reasons given for affirmative answers were:

- First preference is for call centres to be located in Canada serving Canadians, but would be acceptable if quality standards and assurance are in place
- Both use ASL, however may experience regional vocabulary and language styles as potential challenges
- Québec organizations that answered yes, stated for ASL only, not LSQ

Themes for the negative answers were:

- U.S. standards are not sufficient for Canada
- ASL and regional dialects are significantly different and warrant Canadian only VRS
- U.S. culture is different from Canadian culture
- No LSQ in U.S.
- Important to preserve the French culture and language of the Québécois

3.3.4. Key Incentives for Interpreters to Work in VRS

Themes pertaining to the key incentives for VRS from the questionnaires are summarized below:

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[90] Vicarious trauma results from witnessing another person's traumatic experience. See
http://www.nabs.org.au/07_vicarious_trauma.htm

- Flexible hours, competitive pay, less travel time
- Stable and consistent work
- Understanding of management regarding the complexities of interpreting work
- Professional development training
- Opportunities for advancement
- Employer may pay for AVLIC membership – (not relevant to Québec)
- Employer assists interpreters to achieve COI – (not relevant to Québec)
- Teaming and support opportunity
- If Canadian Deaf are served by VRS
- Ability to balance community work with VRS[91]

4. Interpreter Training Programs

4.1. Background Information on Interpreter Training Programs

Interpreter training programs (ITP) in Canada have evolved over the last fifty years from volunteers, to graduates of one year programs, to the current standard of 2 to 3 year programs with a one year prerequisite certification in ASL/Deaf Studies.[92] This evolution has reflected the growing needs of the community as Deaf people are increasingly taking their rightful place in society and require higher skilled interpretations (e.g. legal proceedings, government participation, and higher education). It is paramount that the training of interpreters matches the increasing skill levels required by the Deaf community. In response to these needs, an increased pressure exists to move interpreter training to degree programs.[93]

Interpreter training programs in the U.S. have grown from 2 in 1968, to 14 in 1978, to 55 in 1988, to 85 in 1998, to 130 in 2008, and is now currently at 144. This remarkable growth of U.S. interpreter programs was undoubtedly strengthened by powerful legislation regarding the rights of Deaf people to access interpreter services: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act in 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004. It should be noted that among these training programs much variation exists concerning prerequisites, curriculum, and expertise of faculty; resulting

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[91] Only if VRS providers works with the service agencies in Quebec. CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[92] Gordon, M.G. and Hardy, M. *Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and Interpreter Education in BC*, Dec 2009, pg. 2

[93] This trend is supported by the fact that in 2012 the U.S. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) will require all new interpreters to have a bachelor's degree in order to apply for certification.
http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/News/Degree_Requirement_Extension.pdf

in a large deviation among the graduates, particularly in regard to skill level and readiness to enter the professional interpreting field.[94]

In Canada, there are five ASL-English training programs and one LSQ-French training program. This number has remained fairly stable since the 1990's and has not experienced significant growth.

ASL-English Interpreter Programs (AEIP) in Canada all follow a similar curriculum and program structure. The prerequisite certificate in ASL/Deaf Studies is typically a one year program with in-depth study of ASL and Deaf culture. Those who obtain this certificate become eligible to apply to the AEIP; however the certificate does not guarantee acceptance into the program. Individuals who have obtained knowledge of ASL and Deaf culture through other means, such as CODAs,[95] family members, or other contact with the Deaf community are also sometimes accepted into the AEIP without the prerequisite certificate. The selection and screening process will evaluate those individuals' skill levels and determine whether they have met the prerequisite. The AEIPs in Canada are 2 to 3 year curriculums leading to a diploma in ASL-English interpreting. All programs incorporate a practicum where students have the opportunity to gain real life experience through placement into various settings. These programs are intended to graduate "generalist" interpreters with the expectation that specific speciality skills (e.g. legal, medical, education) will be obtained through on-the-job experience and continuing education opportunities.

The LSQ-French interpreter program follows a similar curriculum with an eight month certificate in LSQ communication and Deaf culture from Le Cégep du Vieux Montréal as a suggested, but not required certificate[96] and a two year program at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) leading to a diploma in visual interpretation. Québec also offers training for oral transliteration at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

Research for this study phase, included faculty of five out of six[97] interpreter training programs providing responses to questionnaires, interviews, follow up consultation, and Internet research related to the individual programs. The participants were also asked questions concerning VRS and those responses are included under a synopsis of each program. It is important to note that in British Columbia and Alberta, Telus has contracted with Sorenson VRS to provide a trial of VRS services, which is presently scheduled to end June 30th 2011.[98] The faculty in B.C. has some experience with VRS and some of their

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[94] National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centres (NCIEC). *Toward Effective Practices: A National Dialogue on AA-BA Partnerships.* Linda Stauffer, Pauline Annarino, Shelley Lawrence: Editors. 2008. Pg 8-9

[95] CODA: Acronym for Children of Deaf Adults typically refers to hearing or Deaf children who learn ASL from their parents and are raised in the Deaf culture.

[96] The certificate is listed as one way to provide qualification in knowledge of LSQ. Prerequisites include a diploma of collegial studies or appropriate experience and demonstrated knowledge of LSQ. See http://www.registrariat.uqam.ca/Pdf/programmes/4393.pdf.

[97] Lakeland College declined to participate due to illness and unavailability of the department chair.

[98] Community members have requested an extension to January 15th 2012.

recent graduates are currently working in VRS call centres in Canada. The VRS call centres in BC and Alberta are involved in the trial serving Canadians, but the other Sorenson VRS call centres throughout Canada are serving the U.S., reportedly causing a shortage of interpreters to serve Deaf Canadians.[99] The implementation of VRS in Canada will undoubtedly impact the already apparent shortage of qualified interpreters. Therefore it is important to include recommendations from the interpreter training community to address these issues.

In addition to the interpreter training programs, the Canadian Hearing Society/Ontario Interpreting Services were also interviewed regarding their internship program for recent AEIP graduates and the faculty at Le Cégep du Vieux Montréal regarding the certificate in LSQ communication and Deaf culture. Also included are the responses of Ecole St-Jude's Language parle complete (LPC) trainer in Québec.

4.2. Douglas College in Vancouver, British Columbia

Vancouver Community College (VCC) houses the ten month certificate program in ASL/Deaf studies, while Douglas College (DC) houses the Interpreter Education Diploma program (IEP).

4.2.1.   Program Information and Enrolment

The following comments are in response to questions about the program, current enrolment, different forms of language taught, and recruitment efforts from the faculty at Douglas College.

> "We offer a two-year Interpreter Education Program (IEP) focused on ASL-English Interpretation. Students graduate with a diploma in Sign Language Interpretation. (Entrance requirements include fluency in English and ASL so most students have previously attended a full-time, 10-month ASL & Deaf Studies Program at Vancouver Community College before applying to the interpreting program at Douglas College. We also have applicants from other ASL &Deaf Studies programs across Canada and, to a lesser extent, applicants who have learned ASL through other avenues.)
>
> We offer 16 seats each fall and for the past few years have accepted 18 students. Currently, we have 14 students in their final semester and 15 students finishing their first year of study.
>
> Average of approximately 12 graduates/year.
>
> Graduates of the program interpret in many settings and for various populations including children, youth, and adults, and individuals who are Deaf-Blind. Consumers' language preferences range along the language spectrum from ASL to various degrees of contact sign and sign-supported speech (not cued speech), and most graduates have

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[99] Canadian Association of the Deaf, Letter to Federal Communications Commission dated 4 June 2010 http://prodnet.www.neca.org/publicationsdocs/wwpdf/6410cad.pdf

*some experience with tactile communication for Deaf-Blind consumers. Settings include
K-12, post-secondary, community, medical, mental health, legal, and VRS."[100]*

Douglas College does not provide training in oral transliteration or cued speech, but does include
mention of the various forms of contact sign an interpreter may encounter in the Deaf community. In
regard to recruitment purposes, Douglas College reports:

*"The interpreting program works in conjunction with the provincial interpreter
association, the Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI). WAVLI
members attend various job fairs and beginning ASL classes to promote the field of sign
language interpretation. Program faculty attend the ASL & Deaf Studies program twice
a year to promote interpreting as a career and the Douglas College program."[101]*

4.2.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

In order to respond to the potential shortage of interpreters if VRS is implemented in Canada, questions
were asked concerning the ability of each program to expand or accelerate the current program to
accommodate more students. The responses from Douglas College faculty are:

*"We do not believe accelerated training would be a viable option to adequately prepare
interpreters for VRS interpreting. Our current system in which interpreters begin the
interpreting program with adequate fluency in ASL to be able to focus on learning the
interpreting process allows us to focus on interpretation so our graduates are eventually
able to do VRS work.*

*It is important to not focus only on the technical aspect of interpretation but recognize
that cultural understanding is absolutely necessary for proper interpretation to occur.
That, along with instruction related to ethics, ethical decision-making, working with
marginalized communities, etc., all add to the quality of service our graduates provide.
This could not be accomplished adequately in an accelerated program.*

*We control the program curriculum and can introduce new topics. We recognize the
importance of smaller class size for appropriate language development and learning the
interpreting process. We do not have the ability at this time to expand the number of
students we admit into the program.*

*If there were more people interested in becoming interpreters, we would need to expand
our program dramatically to accept more than the current 16-18/year. This would lead*

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[100] Questionnaire Responses from Douglas College.

[101] Ibid.

to concerns about facilities being available, funding to support this, and a possible lack of instructors."[102]

4.2.3. Douglas College Perspectives on VRS

Douglas College currently includes information on VRS in the curriculum with specific attention paid to the challenges of providing effective interpretations in that setting. Articles about VRS from an interpreting perspective are included in the required readings for students and again focus on specific demands generated from video relay interpreting. General knowledge of technology and the use of videophones are covered throughout the program and have been included in the curriculum since the inception of VRS interpreting. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to use the service to make a call, [103]tour a VRS centre, and some students are placed in a VRS centre as part of their practicum studies.

The consensus from the faculty at Douglas College concerning interpreting in the VRS setting is in relation to minimum requirements for hiring VRS interpreters. The college asserts that at minimum, graduation from one of the five AEIPs and membership in AVLIC should be required for ASL-English interpreting in the VRS environment. Currently, they are concerned about the hiring practices of VRS providers who are not following this minimum requirement.

> *"We are concerned about the practice of hiring unqualified (untrained) signers to act as interpreters; this includes hiring children of Deaf adults who may be fluent in ASL, but who have not studied the interpreting process, ethics, decision-making, business practices, etc… Our opinion is that VRS should use only individuals who have been educated about the interpreting process – or in other words, those who have completed a recognized interpreter education program. To hire people who have not studied interpretation would lead to poor quality service being provided."*[104]

Douglas College thus maintains that knowing sign language and even fluency in a signed language does not qualify someone to practice the skill of interpreting. This becomes more apparent with the additional unique VRS challenges of interpreting a high volume of calls from varying Deaf consumers all with different backgrounds, signing styles, and subject matter.

Another important theme raised is that a balance between VRS interpreting and community interpreting should be maintained.

> *"We are also concerned about interpreters limiting themselves to working only at VRS centres. I would like to see them keep a certain number of hours for community interpreting assignments. This is important to maintain a presence and a healthy and*

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[102] Ibid

[103] Using Sorenson equipment as part of the Telus Sorenson VRS trial in BC.

[104] Questionnaire Responses from Douglas College.

positive relationship with the Deaf community. It will also help to keep their ASL abilities more natural-looking and avoid being 'boxed' in by the constraints of the VRS medium."[105]

Potential VRS providers for Canada need to be aware of these concerns; collaboration with training programs and community interpreters may be warranted.

4.3. Lakeland College in Alberta[106]

4.3.1. Program Information and Enrolment

Lakeland College located on the University of Alberta campus offers a one year ASL/Deaf Studies certificate program. This certificate is the prerequisite for the two year Sign Language Interpretation diploma program also offered at the college. The certificate is stated as the best way to acquire the competencies needed to apply for the diploma program, but applicants who have achieved proficiency in another form are also welcome to apply. Applicants who show advanced sign language skills and knowledge of Deaf culture are invited to take part in a selection process used to determine eligibility for the program. Typically, this process involves a screening process, personal interviews, and possible transition coursework.[107]

The Sign Language Interpretation diploma program began in August of 2008 with a capacity of 16 students. The first intake had 15 students and was estimated to have 11 graduates in December 2009.[108] The second cohort is currently undergoing training and all 11 students are expected to graduate in December 2011.[109]

4.4. Red River College/University of Manitoba

4.4.1. Program Information and Enrolment

The ASL-English Interpreting Program (AEIP) is a joint effort of the Red River College (RRC) and the University of Manitoba; it is unique in that upon completion, students are awarded the diploma in interpretation and a degree in linguistics from the University. The prerequisite for the AEIP is a one year Deaf Studies program. The AEIP is a three year program where students take classes at both the college

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Lakeland College declined participation due to Department Chair being on long term illness leave. No other faculty feels competent to give the in-depth answers needed for such a survey.

[107] http://www.lakelandcollege.ca/programs/human_services/sign-language/courses.aspx

[108] Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and interpreter education in BC, Gordon, M.G.; Hardy, M. Dec 2009 pg. 29

[109] Email from Debra Russell 05/25/2011

and the university. Specifically, classes in linguistics and ASL structure are taken at the University of Manitoba, while ASL-English interpreting courses are taken at Red River College.[110]

The AEIP can now accommodate up to 20 students, but enrolment is not full at this time:

> "*Currently, there are 14 students in year 1; 8 in year 2; and 2 in year 3. There are 2 students graduating for 2011. However, in the past we have had a graduating class of 5. We are expecting an increase over the next few years. For instance, next year we hope 6 students will graduate, and possibly within the next 2 years there will be 12 graduates.*
>
> *There will be 2 graduates from our interpreter training program this year, which I know is a smaller than usual number. We are anticipating however that that number will increase significantly in the next few years, which will mean there will be more interpreters entering the work force. The development of VRS services in Canada could provide those future interpreters with an additional opportunity for employment that is flexible and which could accommodate their varying schedules.*"[111]

The low number of graduates is expected to change as the college is undergoing a program renewal and many curriculum changes are planned. Some of these changes are expected to generate more interest in the program through greater involvement from the Deaf community. A major component for the success of a training program is the involvement of Deaf mentors for the students to interact with.

In regard to recruitment efforts, the college and university both utilize open house events annually in order to attract and inform potential students about the interpreting program. They also have a booth at the annual Career Symposium, to recruit students and enhance interest in the program.

Graduates are trained to work with Deaf/deaf, hard of hearing, hearing, and Deaf/Blind communities which accounts for a large array of consumer groups and needs. RRC reports a strong foundation in ASL is the best way to ensure an interpreter's ability to handle various forms of communication that may be used by the consumers they encounter, and graduates of the program receive that foundation. They are also skilled to interpret any interaction at their discretion, as a large focus throughout the program is on ethics and knowing which assignments are appropriate for new graduates. No training is offered in oral transliteration or cued speech.

4.4.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

In response to questions regarding the ability to expand or accelerate training to accommodate a potential shortage of interpreters if VRS is implemented, the faculty had the following comments:

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[110] http://me.rrc.mb.ca/Catalogue/CourseDescriptions.aspx?ProgCode=AMESF-DP&RegionCode=WPG

[111] Questionnaire responses from Red River College.

"First of all we need more trained ASL instructors to be teaching ASL. Right now, the program only has space for 20 students. In order to increase that number we would require funding not only for staff but for lab space too."[112]

Furthermore, Red River College and the University of Manitoba believe accelerated training is not a viable solution due to the complexity of the interpreting process. At the present time, they do not include any in-depth training on VRS or VRI. However, they are undergoing a program renewal and intend to incorporate VRS/VRI training into the curriculum. Sorenson in Winnipeg has offered opportunities for the college to offer practicum courses at their call centre, however at this time faculty has declined the offer. As a community based program, the faculty expressed concern that involving Sorenson might alienate many of the Deaf community. It is reported that many Deaf community members are extremely displeased with Sorenson setting up call centres in Canada and "stealing" interpreters out of the community to work for the U.S. As such, Red River College will only consider working with Sorenson if the service is offered to Canadian consumers.[113]

4.4.3. Red River College and University of Manitoba Perspectives on VRS

The faculty had the following comments in response to what the most important considerations for VRS from the perspective of interpreter training:

"The most important requirement is that the interpreters that are hired must have graduated from a recognized interpreter training program. In addition I feel it is important that the interpreters are proficient in ASL, English and must have well-developed message equivalency skills. Due to the immense variety in interactions that an interpreter may find himself or herself facilitating it is important that the VRS interpreters have a breadth of knowledge.

A major issue for interpreters working in VRS is a lack of background knowledge relating to the communication being interpreted. In live events, interpreters may obtain documents and information pertaining to the event that contextualizes the event and the participants. In VRS this is usually not possible; untrained and less-experienced interpreters frequently do not have the expertise to manage this aspect of VRS work."[114]

The faculty also expressed concern that the Sorenson VRS call centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba was hiring inexperienced interpreters. They report that after pressure from the Deaf community Sorenson changed the hiring criteria to include AVLIC membership, although those hired before the new

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Skype interview Red River College 05/17/2011

[114] Questionnaire Responses from Red River College.

requirement are still employed. They feel that this is an important consideration and needs to be remedied if Canada is to implement a national VRS.[115]

4.5.   George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario

4.5.1.   Program Information and Enrolment

George Brown College (GBC) is currently the largest of the five ASL-English interpreting training programs in Canada.   Similar to the others, GBC has specific admission requirements including completion of a minimum of 200 hours of ASL instruction, which is best acquired through a one year ASL Deaf Studies certificate or equivalent. The AEIP is three years in duration and prepares students to work as effective sign language interpreters. The curriculum combines theoretical and practical learning experiences intended to enhance the student's linguistic knowledge and further their awareness of Deaf culture.[116]

The program has the capacity to take in 27 students annually making it the largest of the ASL-English programs in Canada.   Currently, the enrolment numbers for the AEIP are:

- First year   19 students
- Second year   22 students
- Third year   13 students

On average the college graduates between 10 and 14 students per year. The focus is purely on ASL-English, but as stated in other colleges' responses, faculty at GBC believe that a strong foundation in ASL prepares interpreters for any of the contact varieties they may encounter out in the Deaf community. No specific training in oral transliteration or cued speech is included in the curriculum.

> "We train for a diverse Deaf community in Ontario which include the general Deaf and hard of hearing population that use ASL, Deaf professionals, and Deaf immigrants."

The faculty at GBC described efforts to conduct recruitment and outreach to potential ITP students as follows:

> "We host monthly information sessions during the college year at the college. We also do outside recruitment such as going to the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) to present in their ASL classes as an example. We host booths at community events such as Mayfest and Junefest and participate at the annual College Fair."[117]

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[115] Skype interview Red River College 05/17/2011

[116] http://www.georgebrown.ca/Marketing/FTCal/comsrv/C110.aspx

[117] Questionnaire Responses from George Brown College.

GBC states that the biggest challenge in recruiting students to the AEIP is lack of language proficiency to satisfy the admission requirements. They report many students are not able to cognitively and linguistically process languages or tend to not have the bicultural sensitivity required for interpreting work and therefore are not accepted into the program.

4.5.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

At the present time GBC indicated that they would not be interested in expanding their ability to admit more students over the current maximum (27) due to the complex nature of interpreter training and the fact that smaller class sizes allow for more individual interaction with instructors. However, they do believe that curriculum expansion to include more topics on VRS would be feasible and would develop resources to expand training to further include topics pertaining to VRS. In addition, consideration is now being given to developing post graduate studies for AEIP graduates.

Another challenge to expansion or recruiting more students is limited funding and lack of qualified ASL instructors. However, GBC offers a 15 month fast track ASL and Literacy Instructor Program for Deaf and non deaf individuals who are fluent in ASL. One of the goals of this program is to increase the number of qualified ASL instructors.

4.5.3. George Brown College Perspectives on VRS

Third year students take a course in "Entrepreneurial Skills for Interpreters," which introduces students to Sorenson through a field trip to their Toronto call centre. Discussions are also underway to engage in a partnership with Sorenson to provide practicum opportunities for students, but are currently on hold as the Sorenson office is relocating and hiring a new manager.

The key considerations for VRS from a GBC interpreter training perspective are summarized as:

- Best incentive for Canadian interpreters to work in VRS is if the service is for Canadians
- Certification or registration with OIS[118] or other agency is essential in providing a standard level of interpretation.

In regard to skills needed for VRS:

> *"From our perspective of interpreter training, we believe that the most important considerations for VRS work are: bilingual competency in ASL and English with correct grammar and register variants, success in managing the cognitive and linguistic processing during interpreting, making sound ethical decisions, an understanding of cross-cultural dynamics and power imbalances in the Deaf and non-deaf communities."[119]*

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[118] Ontario Interpreting Services. See Section 3.1 Certification, Accreditation, and Evaluation Procedures.

[119] Questionnaire Responses from George Brown College.

It is the faculty's belief that these competencies are best obtained through graduation from a recognized interpreter training program and a few years of experience interpreting in the community.

4.6. Nova Scotia Community College

4.6.1. Program Information and Enrolment

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) offers a one year Deaf studies certificate program, which serves as the prerequisite for a two year ASL-English interpreting program. Similar to all the other programs, this prerequisite is the recommended way to achieve the skills necessary to enrol in the AEIP, but in some cases other equivalents will be considered as part of the screening and selection process. The program can accommodate a maximum of 16 students and current enrolment is:

- AEIP Year 1:   10 students
- AEIP Year 2   5 students

On average, NSCC graduates 8 to 12 students per year. Students are trained to be general entry level interpreters and learn how to be flexible to accommodate different variations of ASL, however no training in oral transliteration or cued speech are included. In order to recruit students, the college holds monthly information sessions for potential and interested students and twice a year visits ASL classes to inform about the programs.[120]

4.6.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

The faculty at NSCC states that they are always looking for ways to improve their program and that if a significant increase in ITP graduates is necessary to support VRS, they would be interested in expanding and adding topics to accommodate the need. In reference to the challenges of meeting an increased demand such as, lack of funding, lack of interested students, and lack of qualified instructors, NSCC believes that none of these challenges are insurmountable and they would be up to the challenge. However, increased government funding would be necessary for expansion.

4.6.3. Nova Scotia Community College Perspectives on VRS

VRS represents a small percentage of the overall curriculum. However, the faculty states that there are some practicum opportunities in this environment through the local Sorenson VRS call centre, which includes training and the opportunity to interpret mock practice calls.

The most important consideration for VRS from NSCC's perspective is to ensure access to quality video relay and interpreting services. They also state that given the opportunity to be supervised and team with a seasoned interpreter, that a graduate of a recognized interpreter training program could handle VRS work.

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[120] Questionnaire Responses from Nova Scotia Community College.

In addition, the faculty had the following comments regarding challenges for VRS in Canada:

> "*Like so many efforts launched in Canada, the biggest challenge is making a service economically viable in a country with so many square kilometers and a relatively small population that is spread far and wide. As a Canadian, as an interpreter and as a teacher of interpreters, it is a source of embarrassment that our Deaf and hearing colleagues don't have access to a service that has long been technically possible.   We are keen to see VRS come to Canadians!*"[121]

4.7. CÉGEP du Vieux Montréal[122]

4.7.1.   Program Information and Enrolment

Cégep du Vieux Montréal (CVM) offers a 570 hour full time intensive day program spread out over an eight month period resulting in a Certificate of Collegiate Studies (AEC) in Communication and Deaf studies. This certificate serves as one of the ways to establish LSQ knowledge equivalency for admission to the visual interpreting diploma program at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). However, it should be noted that many final year students in this program choose to begin working as interpreters without continuing on to the UQAM program.

> "*Final-year students in the AEC in Communication and Deafness become communicators and have a solid grasp of Québecois sign language which allows them to begin studies in visual interpretation. Some decide to take this training in order to specialize in their field: special education, social work, speech therapy, teaching; others decide to change course to become interpreters. By our count, for most cohorts, 50% of final-year students continue their studies in interpretation at university in order to perfect their knowledge and to learn the profession of interpretation. Moreover, many final-year students of the AEC decide to become practicing interpreters after their collegiate education.*"[123]

Each year between ten and twenty students enroll in the AEC with an average of 15 graduates per year. Although not an interpretation training program, the college does graduate students that are capable of communicating in LSQ and transliteration forms of communication. Faculty states that students are trained to work with the "deaf and hard of hearing of all ages."

> "*The AEC does not offer a program in interpretation. However, this program is the only one to offer a credited training in LSQ (180 hours) and in transliteration[124] (90hours); the communicators are equipped to communicate effectively with the deaf. There are other*

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[121] Ibid.

[122] All quoted comments have been translated from French to English.

[123] Questionnaire Responses from Cégep du Vieux Montréal.

[124] Oral no sign language interpretation.

courses in the program, notably: cultural aspects of deafness, the history of deafness, non-verbal communication, specialized communication, an internship of 57 hours within the deaf community, etc."[125]

The faculty is very active in conducting recruitment efforts for potential students as listed below:

- *Recruitment through social networks*
- *Advertisement in our program guide for the Cégep du Vieux Montréal*
- *Advertisement on our website*
- *Advertisement in the visual interpreters section of the Student Integration Assistance Service (SAIDE)*
- *Our program is listed in the admission requirements, knowledge of LSQ section, for the Visual Interpretation Certificate program*
- *During events within the deaf community: ExpoSourds, etc.*
- *Advertisement with our deafness partners*
- *Guidance counselors in secondary schools and other services in Québec*
- *Word of mouth and more*[126]

Some students continue on to the UQAM program and others take the AEC program to specialize in a specific area related to their current employment, such as teaching, speech therapy, social work, and special education. Recruitment efforts are directed at all potentially interested students.

4.7.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

The college reports current training of visual interpreters in Québec is insufficient to adequately meet the education needs of students.

> *"There are presently gaps in the training of visual interpreters in Québec since training in visual interpretation is incomplete: content, period over which it is spread, practical experience, etc. Our establishment and UQAM have submitted this problem to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport [Ministry of Education, Sports, and Leisure] and we are awaiting a decision from the relevant authorities."*[127]

CVM is also an employer of interpreters through the service organization Cégep du Vieux-Montréal – service d'aide à l'intégration des élèves (SAIDE). CVM states that with additional funding for the program they could offer expanded training through the service agency, dependent on their ability to attract qualified faculty.

> *"The Cégep du Vieux Montréal has several resources for teaching visual interpretation. In the past when requested, our establishment offered visual interpreters training in*

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

occupational health and occupational safety as well as training in perfecting visual interpretation.

If you have the financial resources to support a visual interpretation program, we could, through one of our service centres, offer an intensive training adapted to your needs."[128]

CVM reports that the biggest challenges to meeting an increased demand for visual language interpreters from a training program perspective are:

- Insufficient number of experienced interpreters
- Lack of intensive training in visual interpretation
- Lack of financing
- Lack of a specialized teaching laboratory

4.7.3.   Cégep du Vieux Montréal Perspectives on VRS

VRS is not currently covered in the curriculum at CVM, however the college reports having some experience with VRI through internal pilot tests. These tests did not have adequate equipment for accurate transmissions, but CVM remarks that the service was beneficial and would alleviate the problems associated with sending interpreters to distant locations. CVM further comments that this type of service would help alleviate the shortage of ASL-English interpreters available in Québec by allowing ASL Deaf users to access, via video an ASL-English interpreter.

CVM stated that the following forms of communication should be available for VRS: "oral, natural gesture-supported speech, sign supported speech, and LSQ." CVM believes oral interpretation could also help those who might not be deaf, but mute, by giving them a voice and therefore should be included in the provision of VRS for Canada.[129]

The most important considerations regarding VRS for the faculty at CVM are linked to significant concerns about maintaining interpreter availability for the community.

"To offer a service while maintaining awareness of the needs of the community in order to avoid mortgaging the current organizations that supply visual interpretation services in Québec, more specifically in the Francophone LSQ sector. The Anglophone ASL sector can, in our opinion, more easily benefit from resources in the other provinces and in the United States.

There should be collaboration with the different LSQ visual interpreter employers in Québec and the VRS.

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

For LSQ interpreters, we are concerned that the implementation of this service will empty the pool of qualified visual LSQ interpreters who are currently employed by interpreter employers. Is it possible to envision that the future employees of the VRS will maintain a % of availability for their current employers? Or again, must one think that the different LSQ interpretation services in Québec will work in partnership with a VRS call center so that some of their staff will work as interpreters when they do not have any assignments? I believe that this could be considered for us, and for the SIVET [Visual and Tactile Interpreting Service]."[130]

CVM reports the biggest challenge to successful VRS for Canada; specifically Québec is the current inadequate level of training. The problem has been reported to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure in Québec, but no decision has been made.

4.8. Université of Québec at Montréal[131]

4.8.1. Program Information and Enrolment

Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) offers a part time two-year LSQ-French diploma program consisting of nine 45-hour courses. The faculty consists of Deaf and hearing teachers with all practical workshops taught by both a professional interpreter and a Deaf teacher in a team environment. After these courses are completed a 150-hour internship is required and consists of 25 hours of seminar, 35 hours of observation, and 90 hours of interpreting. During the internship students are expected to complete and present a research project related to the interpreting field. The internship is supervised by a professionally recognized interpreter. Towards the end of the internship, students undergo a final evaluation process. Occasionally, some students do not meet the requirements to graduate and are offered an opportunity to continue their internships; staggered across three terms equivalent to one full year.[132]

UQAM can accommodate 45 students per year. In April 2010 the school had 45 applicants and 33 were selected. Unfortunately, the attrition rate is extremely high with initial class sizes starting at between 25 to 35 students and with approximately 5 graduates per year. Many of the students are able to find work before completing the program due to several employers not requiring the diploma. Therefore, UQAM reports that many LSQ-French interpreters are beginning professional careers without having finished adequate professional education.

"The loss rate is very high in this program. Most of the students find a job during the training and no employer requires the diploma which makes it possible to postulate that the majority of students enter professional life without having finished their degree

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[130] Ibid.

[131] All quoted comments have been translated from French to English.

[132] Questionnaire Responses from Université du Québec à Montréal.

course. Out of cohorts, varying from 25 to 35 students at admission, the graduation rate for the three previous years has been 8 (2007), 2 (2008), and 6 (2009)."[133]

The comments of CQDA regarding the high rate of attrition are:

"Attrition also comes from the time to really get the diploma. The fact is that not many interpreters can go through this program in only two years. Many students have complained that courses have been often cancelled due to lack of registration. Because the certificate cannot be obtained in one year like all others, it is quite difficult to have students from other regions move to Montreal, find a part-time job during their more than two-year studies. Many just start interpreting part-time and study part-time. Furthermore, after getting through all this, interpreters that go back to their region are not sure to find full-time jobs and make a living at interpreting. CQDA believes that because there is no provincial certification and that employers, mainly interpreting agencies, have their own in-house evaluation and don't always pay more for an interpreter holding a certificate, students tired of stretching a supposed two-year certificate just to go to work."[134]

The training at UQAM is typically offered in LSQ-French, but they have the ability to train ASL-English interpreters also.

"The training is usually offered from French into LSQ and from LSQ into French. However, we have adapted this training (2008/2009) for a small cohort of English/ASL interpreters in response to a request from the Agency of Health and Social Services of Montréal which subsidized the project. We would be ready to renew the experience, modifying certain conditions. For this training, we produced pedagogical material adapted to the teaching of English/ASL interpreting and we still have this material for other possible cohorts."[135]

The program at one time did offer training in oral transliteration, but encountered difficulty attracting students. A report on visual interpreting in Québec makes comment on oral transliteration training as follows:

"Originally, the certificate at UQAM had two specializations: the gestural and the oral. The oral transliteration was closed in 1996 because the number of applications for admission was not enough. Other universities in the province have offered oral component of training for one or more cohorts (Université of Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, UQAT, Université of Québec at Chicoutimi, UQAC) according to the

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[133] Ibid.

[134] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[135] Ibid.

needs of their region or attempted to offer this program (Université of Québec at Trois-Rivieres, UQTR). All of them closed (except UQTR which provides the formation occasionally (when the number of students is enough). Barriers to provide or maintain the oral component of the active program were the low number of participants, their spread over large areas, job requirements at the time (a non-recognized) in schools, job insecurity and conducting private training earlier responding to more urgent needs. These elements have helped reduce the number of potential students. Since 2007, a program oral interpretation, however, is offered in <u>continuing education </u>by the Université of Québec at Trois-Rivieres (continuing education does not provide a diploma as in regular education, but EU (unit of education). This program is intended primarily for interpreters already employed in the school boards." [136]

From this same report, the recommendation for structuring future visual language interpreter training programs is to have a general interpreting curriculum, including foundations in the linguistics of the two working languages LSQ and French. It should also include specific courses on transliteration and the various areas of work (e.g. academics, legal, social community). Due to the limited amount of workers and the closing of several programs exclusive to oral transliteration, the report recommends a more generalized curriculum, such as that referenced earlier.[137]

UQAM states that their students do not receive specific training in specialized areas (e.g. academics, medical, legal). They are trained similarly to the other training programs in Canada to become generalists with the appropriate knowledge and aptitude to work among the diverse deaf community. Although, if given the opportunity to restructure the program to a 4-year baccalauréat, it may be possible to include further specializations, including VRS.

UQAM conducts recruitment and outreach to potential students during the winter and fall sessions of LSQ language courses that request it. These courses are offered by rehabilitation centers and by some associations. These promotions are also run during winter session at Cégep du Vieux Montréal in their Communication and Deaf studies program. They indicate that their difficulty lies not in attracting students, but in retaining them.

4.8.2.   Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

UQAM's response concerning ability to expand training and introduce new topics is:

"The primary obstacle to the training of visual interpreters is the absence of recognition of the diploma. The employers that hire interpreters without recognizing the diploma participate in the loss of cohorts in the training programs. Otherwise, the material equipment, financing, human resources (number and qualification) are sufficient to

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[136] Parisot, Anne-Marie & Villeneuve, Suzanne, et al. *L'Interpretation Visuelle Aupres D'une Clientele Sourde. Portrait d'Une Profession et Etat de la Situation Sur Les Besoins de Formation.* 2008. Pg 14.

[137] Ibid.

welcome numerous cohorts. The average target of the UQAM is a minimum of 44 students per class. The sectional software labs are equipped to teach with the aid of new communication technologies and the annual budgets allow each department to equip itself with technical tools and software adapted to specific teaching needs.

We can without difficulty admit a greater number of students. What's more, we have already developed a plan for a baccalauréat including course contents on the specifics of the VRS. The teachers are the most experienced in Québec in terms of teaching the interpreting and linguistics of LSQ. They are locally and internationally recognized for their professional expertise and their research. They are innovators and are fully informed about the new technologies. Moreover, the teachers offered in the UQAM Certificate in Interpreting benefit from the support of the LSQ and Deaf Bilingualism Research Group, whose research findings regularly enriches the course contents and methods of evaluation."[138]

With reference to the feasibility of accelerated training for VRS, the faculty had the following comment:

"A temporary training could be developed on request via the UQAM Business Services. Initially, this training could be custom designed to quickly (one trimester) satisfy the needs for knowledge specific to the VRS. This supplementary training could be taken by interpreters who already have training. The financial responsibility would then be assumed by the employer. Candidates who have not received any training in visual interpreting would take the fundamental training, which currently ends in two years, to which a VRS module would be added."[139]

UQAM states that no limit exists on the amount of students they could accommodate in their program. They further report that they have never had to make those kinds of decisions and the most students ever enrolled at one time was 45. If there was a need, UQAM believes it is capable of reorganizing and accommodating additional students.

4.8.3. Université of Québec at Montréal Perspectives on VRS

UQAM states that because VRS service has never been offered in LSQ-French, this topic has not been included in the curriculum. They do have a brief description of the difference between live and remote interpreting in a methods and practices course and plan to include VRI and VRS if baccalauréat training is approved.

The concerns of the faculty at UQAM are similar to the other training programs surveyed and relate to proper training. Faculty reports that the only way to ensure qualified interpreters and a quality service is to require completion of training at the Université level; particularly due to the very specific

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[138] Questionnaire Responses from Université du Québec à Montréal.

[139] Ibid.

challenges involved in interpreting work. Furthermore, not doing so leads to serious ramifications for the Deaf consumers.

> *"…the reputation of the service is dependent on the quality of the service given. It is useless, even dangerous, to offer a mediocre service (serious interpreting mistakes can have regrettable impact on the deaf and hearing individuals.) Moreover, duly trained interpreters will be more assiduous and regular in their commitment. The fact that they are equipped with the tools and knowledge to overcome the difficulties of the career has a direct impact on the appreciation of a worker for his or her own work and therefore his or her desire to maintain it."[140]*

The key incentives for interpreters to work in VRS from the perspective of UQAM include:

> *"Regularity of employment, fewer travel required to go to assignment locations, work within a team of interpreters (therefore the possibility to consult peers in case of difficulty). On the other hand, the working conditions would have to be more advantageous than what currently exists in the other sectors (academic and social-community) in order to attract the best candidates. Furthermore, if the VRS would offer our students the possibility of doing an internship, the students would have the opportunity to develop appreciation for this sector."[141]*

The most important considerations for VRS concerning interpreters from UQAM's perspective are:

> *"It is essential to plan to offer good working conditions to the interpreters employed:*
>
> - *Working hours that are favorable and sufficient for making a living;*
> - *Favorable salary (to attract the most experienced who would have a taste for changing working environment, but who already have good conditions elsewhere);*
> - *Continuing education offered by the employer (e.g.: technical and ethical);*
> - *Concern for professional injury to the interpreters (musculoskeletal troubles);*
> - *Clear response protocol for calls (e.g.: if a client is naked or impolite);*
> - *Etc."[142]*

Pertaining to potential VRS in Québec, UQAM believes the most logical location for an LSQ-French call centre is in Montréal, where the majority of LSQ-French interpreters are located. This would also allow a close relationship between the VRS provider and the training program.

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

4.9. Canadian Hearing Society/Ontario Interpreter Internship Program (IIP)

4.9.1. Program Information and Enrolment

Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) is a department within the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) and offers interpreting services for the Ontario area. The Toronto office of OIS/CHS offers a ten month Interpreter Internship Program (IIP) for graduates of an accredited Interpreter Education Program. The graduates may have recently graduated or have been working in the field for a while.[143] The internship involves nine months of training in Toronto and one month of experience as a staff interpreter in one of the CHS regional offices. Four interns are accepted per session and currently the program is running two parallel sessions for a total of eight interns per ten month period. Most graduates go on to become staff or freelance for OIS. This unique program is funded by the Ministry of Health.[144]

The specific requirements for entrance into the program are as follows: [145]

- Graduate of an accredited Interpreter Education Program
- Completion of an OIS Interpreter Internship Program Application
- Completion of the IIP Entrance Screening
- Eligible to work in Canada

The program includes:

- Classroom instruction with both Deaf and hearing trainers
- One-to-one feedback from trainers and interpreter-mentors
- In-depth critical analysis of L1 and L2[146]
- Hands-on interpreting experience in a safe environment under the guidance of experienced staff and freelance interpreters
- Access to OIS video/text resources and innovative lab facilities
- Emphasis on specialized areas such as medical and mental health settings

Ideally, the program would like to attract interpreters from regions currently without, or with limited interpreting resources and as such are offering a subsidy to those who move to the Toronto area for the duration of the program. Interns are also paid a $26,000 per annum salary, which is pro-rated over a 10 month period.[147]

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[143] http://www.chs.ca/en/ois-internship-program-faqs/index.php

[144] http://www.chs.ca/en/ois-internship-program/interpreter-internship-program-5.html

[145] http://www.chs.ca/en/ois-internship-program-faqs/index.php

[146] L1 = First language acquired (e.g. French) and L2= second language acquired(e.g. LSQ)

[147] http://www.chs.ca/en/ois-internship-program-faqs/index.php

The IIP focuses on training interpreters to work with the general Deaf community and focuses on ASL, but also trains to other consumer needs. As such, most of the training is related to community interpreting (e.g. medical, legal, employment, etc.). OIS does not train for education interpreting services. All of the hearing trainers in the program are nationally certified (COI from AVLIC), and the Deaf trainers are all qualified ASL trainers, of which one has experience as a Deaf interpreter.[148]

In regard to outreach and recruitment efforts OIS states:

> *"Our interns come from established Interpreter Education Programs. We have a close working relationship with George Brown College and conduct workshops and tours for students annually. We also recruit through interpreter organizations such as OASLI and AVLIC as well as well known Deaf run web sites – Robert Denny and Deaf Connect. We have a presence at places such as Mayfest and are also well known by reputation."[149]*

This program has been in place since 2002 and has experienced great success with only one person who did not complete the internship.[150] Furthermore, 75 percent of those who have completed the 10 months go on to become OIS registered[151] compared to only 33 percent success rate for those who do not go through the internship. Although the internship program is not a training program, the model used is very successful at better preparing graduates for interpreting work.[152] This model could potentially be utilized by a VRS provider to accelerate training for VRS.

4.9.2. Ability for Expansion and Curriculum Additions

In response to questions regarding expansion and curriculum additions, OIS states:

> *"We are always looking to expand training opportunities and topics – the curriculum is constantly being reviewed following feedback from graduating interns. We are not planning to expand the number of interns we admit as we see our small class size and intensive feedback as the key to our success. Unlike interpreter education programs we are able to offer individualized programming and intensive one to one feedback.*
>
> *Our main challenge is that to increase this program would be a huge increase in resources. We are not willing to water down this intensive, but highly successful program."[153]*

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[148] Ibid

[149] Questionnaire Responses from Ontario Interpreting Services

[150] Ibid.

[151] OIS registration refers to the screening process administered by OIS to qualify interpreters to work in the field.

[152] Mission Consulting Interview with CHS and OIS, 04/13/2011

[153] Questionnaire Responses from Ontario Interpreting Services

Due to the focus on community interpreting OIS is not interested in providing training for VRS, but is willing to share their model of training to VRS providers for the purpose of accelerating training for recent graduates. The program does include training on Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in the form of a two day module, which they plan to expand as community interpreting moves toward VRI.

4.9.3.   Ontario Interpreting Services' Perspectives on VRS

OIS believes that the most qualified interpreters are those with the AVLIC Certificate of Interpretation and as such those individuals should receive priority both in hiring and pay scales for VRS work; however they concede that nationally there are not enough COI interpreters for this purpose.   Therefore, they state that if a good mentorship system is in place, it could be possible, with training, to continue to improve the level of service offered by non COI interpreters and possibly graduates of interpreter programs. They also believe VRS providers should offer ongoing training and assist VRS staff to attain the COI level.

In reference to using U.S. interpreters or U.S. certification for VRS in Canada, OIS had the following comments:

> "It should be noted that RID (the American certification) is not recognized in Canada and has not been approved by the Canadian Deaf community. It should not be viewed as equal to AVLIC as their rating system is very different and the standards fall below the Canadian national standard. Only Canadian certified interpreters (COI) are recognized as being 'certified' in Canada. VRS may look to some of the provincial or federal registrations as a means to verify a certain industry standard, but should only look to AVLIC as a certifying body.

> It should be the goal of VRS to attract or encourage their employees to seek Canadian certification, not certification from another country.

> The American model is often a very English like form of signing. Canada uses a purer form of ASL. Also the American certification is much lower than Canada's. Quality of service will be sacrificed if it is located in another country. There are many interpreter programs in the US and very little similarity in terms of graduate's skill level. You are more likely to 'know what you are getting' if you are hiring Canadian trained interpreters."[154]

OIS has not had much experience with VRS; however they had the following comments regarding VRS in the U.S. and Sorenson VRS in Canada:

> "My understanding is that the interpreter qualifications vary greatly – from highly skilled to recent grads. Little support is given to interpreters in the current company located in

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[154] Ibid.

Ontario and the interpreters I know who works for VRS complain that they are not well supported."

The most important consideration for VRS in Canada from the perspective of OIS is:

"The service should be quality service and reflect the Canadian standards – not an American model that is transposed onto a Canadian landscape."[155]

4.10. Other Forms of Communication

Included in this section are the summarized questionnaire responses of cued speech and oral transliteration courses, both located in Québec.

4.10.1.   École St-Jude- Langage Parlé Complété

École St-Jude offers courses in the training of Langage Parlé Complété (LPC) and is not an interpreter training program. These courses offer a basic training in LPC and can last four days or seven evenings with some additional support training lasting three to four days. Typically, these courses are provided to parents of children in the school program using LPC, special education teachers and speech therapists. Interpreters who work in the school system are also involved in learning LPC for the purpose of working with these children. No certification exists for LPC and instead assessments are performed privately on a contract basis.

In order to expand this type of training, the program reports that additional funding and human resources would be necessary. Currently, the program is not operating at full capacity and could accommodate more participants. The current funding provided by Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure in Québec will end June 2011. École St-Jude reports that in regard to VRS one important consideration is the technical aspect, which would need to be very clear and without delay, in order to see the change between codes. Additional considerations related to VRS are below:

"The use of LPC and Cued English is still not very widespread in Canada. One challenge would be to raise awareness about these communication methods so as to eliminate any prejudice. Usage is increasing in the Montérégie and several other regions in Québec. The number of potential users is expected to increase as well. Training is relatively easy to schedule owing to the short period of time involved.

I think it would be important to include LPC and Cued English in the process, even if they are relatively new communication methods. In the long run, their increased use will enable those who need these services to access them."[156]

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[155] Ibid.

[156] Questionnaire Responses from École St-Jude.

It is unclear what the potential demand for this service will be or if it is a viable option for VRS, as it appears to be used in schools primarily as a way to teach speech. However, as stated earlier the use of cued speech is controversial in the Deaf community and some organizations contacted for this study have expressed disapproval at its inclusion in potential services for Video Relay. On the other hand, the CQDA reports that many LSQ-French interpreters that have difficulty finding full-time work will often learn cued speech in order to obtain additional work. Furthermore, the CQDA believes that VRS should not discriminate against individuals who use other forms of communication.[157]

4.10.2. Université of Québec at Trois-Rivieres

Since 2007 *Université of Québec at Trois-Rivieres (*UQTR) has offered continuing education[158] training in oral transliteration. The training is an intensive program organized into three sessions of fifty hours, resulting in 150 hours. Interpreters may take this training as a way to incorporate oral transliteration into their skill set and therefore be able to accommodate the needs of the oral deaf population.

> *"The goal of this training is to instruct students in specific concepts concerning deafness, communication, and the role of the interpreter when interacting with his or her client. It also aims to develop skills and attitudes that are necessary for oral interpreting so that the interpreter can adapt to the specific needs of the clients, in accordance with their age and the interpreting situations, all while respecting the other individuals involved in the service.*
>
> *Gain experience in oral interpreting, in different environments and in adjusting to the needs of clients, both children and adults, in order to develop a more effective use of the tools used by oral interpreters during the transmission of a message or during other tasks (preparing material, information on his or her role).*
>
> *Acquire the basic theories of LPC. Master the LPC code. Be able to adapt to the needs of the deaf or hard of hearing child and to his or her specific needs in a learning environment. LPC is taught to children by speech therapists."[159]*

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[157] CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[158] Unit of Continued Education (UEC) is a method of acknowledging non-credited advanced education that corresponds to ten hours of work and attendance.

[159] Parisot, Anne-Marie & Villeneuve, Suzanne, et al. *L'Interpretation Visuelle Aupres D'une Clientele Sourde. Portrait d'Une Profession et Etat de la Situation Sur Les Besoins de Formation.* 2008. Appendix 3.

4.11. Summary of Interpreter Training Programs

Table 10: Average Annual Enrolment Capacity and Average Size of Graduating Class-ASL-English

Program	Annual Maximum Intake	Annual Average Number of Graduates
Douglas College	18	12
Lakeland College	16	11
Red River College/University of Manitoba	20	4
George Brown College	27	12
Nova Scotia Community College	16	12
Totals	97	51

Table 11: Average Annual Enrolment Capacity and Average Size of Graduating Class-LSQ-French

Program	Annual Maximum Intake	Annual Average Number of Graduates
Cégep du Vieux Montréal	25	15[160]
Université of Montréal at Québec	45[161]	6
Totals	70	21

[160] Although only one of the suggested certificates for the program at UQAM, faculty states that some graduates begin work as LSQ/French interpreters upon graduation from this program, while others (50%) continue on to obtain a diploma in visual interpreting from UQAM. UQAM would prefer all employers require the diploma.

[161] Many of these students do not finish the program and begin work as interpreters. UQAM strongly recommends requirement of the diploma. Additionally, UQAM reports that they can accommodate any number of students, but currently strive for 45.

Even with a shortage of interpreters, student retention is still a challenge as evidenced by low numbers of graduates when compared to maximum enrolment numbers. It is possible that VRS will create an increased interest in the profession leading to lower student attrition rates and more graduates. ITPs report that based on feedback from students the programs offered should be restructured to degree programs in order to retain and attract more students. Respondents suggested that a four year degree program could be structured as follows:

- First Year: One year prerequisite required by all programs currently.
- Second Year: Marks the beginning of the interpreter training currently.
- Third Year: Second year of ITP currently.
- Fourth Year: Added curriculum and more practicum opportunities to better prepare graduates.

All programs report that their graduates do not have difficulty finding work and that a shortage of interpreters still exists; especially outside of the metropolitan areas, and specifically in the education sector. Moreover, all programs asserted that VRS providers for Canada should only hire individuals who meet the minimum requirements stated earlier and preferably will require a few years of community interpreting to gain experience with the Deaf community. Other themes of significance that emerged from the interpreter training questionnaires were:

- Desire for balance between community work and VRS work
- Need for collaboration between interpreter trainers and VRS providers
- Strong need for VRS and VRI in remote and rural areas
- Incentive for interpreters to work in VRS is if the service is for and by Canadians
- Need for uniform standard of evaluation in Québec

Another important consideration that was identified during these consultations is related to the shortage of qualified ASL/LSQ instructors[162] and how to increase that labour pool in order to meet the increased demand for qualified interpreters. For instance, George Brown College mentioned a fast track program to train for qualified ASL instructors. A similar program existed in Vancouver at Douglas College, but due to the inability of many potential Deaf instructors to afford the tuition, was cancelled due to low enrolment rates. Recommendations from the Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and Interpreter Education in BC include:

> *"The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Housing and Social Development consider financial support for those Deaf individuals who are interested in taking the ASL instructor program."*[163]

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[162] No LSQ instructor training exists in Quebec per CQDA Correspondence 07/05/2011

[163] Gordon, M.G. and Hardy, M. *Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and Interpreter Education in BC*, Dec 2009, pg. 41

5. Potential Responses to a Forecast Shortage of Qualified Interpreters

Recommendations, comments and concerns to address the shortage of interpreters in Canada from the various professional groups surveyed are summarized below.

5.1. Accelerated Training Options

It is the process of teaching interpreting and recognition of the complexity of the profession that is of great importance to those interviewed, which makes the concept of accelerated training not feasible. However, after an individual has graduated from an interpreter training program, it is feasible for that person to receive accelerated training as evidenced by the internship model at CHS. This type of training could be provided as a way to attract recent graduates to VRS. In the U.S., VRS providers have worked with interpreter training programs and some offer recent graduates a school-to-work training program to bridge the gap that exists between recent graduates and their ability to enter professional interpreting environments. The training is designed to increase skill levels of recent graduates so that they can competently enter the VRS work environment. Included in the training are educational work internships and specifically designed courses to prepare students to pass the test for certification.   In exchange for the training, students sign contracts with the provider.[164] This is similar to the OIS internship program and may be an effective way to prepare recent graduates to meet the demands of professional interpreting in the VRS environment.

5.2. Increasing Labour Pool

Increased funding to expand interpreter training programs throughout Canada may be needed to increase the labour pool. Additionally, moving diploma programs to degree programs may increase interest in the profession. In Québec, it is imperative that an evaluation standard be implemented and for employers to require the diploma in visual interpreting from UQAM as the basis for qualification. Offering signed language classes in secondary education as a foreign language elective may increase the amount of individuals exposed to it, therefore resulting in a greater interest in the interpreting profession. Student loan forgiveness and financial grants for qualified students could be offered by the government or VRS providers in order to increase the number of graduates.

5.3. Balance between Community and VRS Interpreting

Balancing work between VRS and the community is a common concern of the interpreting organizations interviewed. They feel that it is critical to provide a solution to the impact VRS will have on the availability of community interpreters. VRS providers should show understanding and sensitivity to this issue by offering a service that accommodates a balance between VRS interpreting and community interpreting. They believe it is the providers' responsibility to engage the community to make sure that

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[164] http://www.sorensonvrs.com/november_2010#STWk

a drain on the interpreter pool is not occurring. VRS providers need to involve the Deaf community and the interpreting community when implementing service in Canada. Those interviewed hope that VRS companies will offer opportunities for individuals to balance their time between VRS and community work, especially if the community is experiencing a shortage of qualified interpreters. This could be achieved through sub-contractor situations or other forms of collaboration between interpreter service agencies and VRS providers.

This concern is greatest in Québec, where the shortage of qualified interpreters is highest. VRS providers would need to work directly with the interpreting agencies and training programs in Québec, in order to prevent a critical shortage of interpreters for the community. According to UQAM faculty surveyed in Québec, it is most practical to locate an LSQ-French call centre in Montréal, where the highest concentration of interpreters exists.[165] This will also allow the VRS provider to work collaboratively with the regional service agencies and offer practicum opportunities to the students of visual interpretation at UQAM.

5.4. Sorenson Call Centres in Canada

The presence of Sorenson call centres in Canada currently employing Canadian ASL-English interpreters and serving U.S. consumers is a significant area of concern in relation to determining whether there are enough interpreters to work in VRS for Canada. The Canadian Association of the Deaf made comment on the situation in a letter to the FCC in the U.S.:

> *"The unique point of our concern is that our interpreters were taken from the Deaf Canadian community by VRS providers without the Deaf Canadian community being provided any of the benefits of the VRS itself. We are not allowed to access those VRS's. At least those Deaf Americans who are made to suffer the same kind of reduction in community interpreting services are permitted the trade-off benefit of accessing VRS interpreting. While the Commission may feel little concern for the situation of Deaf people in Canada, it should take into consideration the humanitarian fact that American VRS should do no harm to Deaf people outside the U.S. As it stands now, American VRS is a predator that is doing profound damage to the lives of Deaf Canadians without any offsetting benefits to us. For the above reasons, the CAD and SRC recommend that either American providers of VRS be required to locate all of their call centres in the U.S., or that the Commission permit the extension of reimbursable VRS calls to include calls originating and terminating in Canada that are made through the providers that have established call centres in this country."[166]*

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[165] Parisot, Anne-Marie & Villeneuve, Suzanne, et al. *L'Interpretation Visuelle Aupres D'une Clientele Sourde. Portrait d'Une Profession et Etat de la Situation Sur Les Besoins de Formation.* 2008. Pg 34.

[166] http://prodnet.www.neca.org/publicationsdocs/wwpdf/6410cad.pdf

The approximate 225 interpreters currently working in these call centres may or may not have contracts that prohibit them from working for other VRS providers. This is a significant issue affecting accurate estimation of the number of interpreters available to work in VRS for Canada. AVLIC expressed concern related to a further shortage of interpreters if Bell Canada is not interested in partnering with Sorenson.

> *"There are already numerous Canadian interpreters employed by a VRS company; should Bell Canada not be interested in partnering with the already established company then there may be an insufficient number of interpreters."*[167]

While the continuation of Sorenson's employment of interpreters in Canada for a new Canadian VRS may have an impact upon the availability of interpreters for community interpreting and VRS, there are many other factors that will ultimately determine such impact, including type of Canadian VRS model selected, VRS payment schemes, VRS hiring and training requirements, interpreter training program availability/funding, etcetera.

Other organizations reported they believe many of the interpreters working in Sorenson's Canadian call centers would rather work for a Canadian company and if given the opportunity, would do so. Additionally, it may be feasible to utilize U.S. call centres to serve Deaf Canadians, but opinions on this are mixed.[168]This of course is not a viable option for LSQ-French consumers.

6. Conclusion

Critical shortages of interpreters have been well documented[169], nonetheless the desire for VRS is high amongst the Deaf and interpreting communities. The issue becomes not whether there are enough interpreters, but rather how to create strategies to increase the pool, balance community needs, and prevent critical shortages. All of these strategies can effectively be created through close collaboration with interpreter agencies and training programs, as well as the Deaf community, when implementing video relay services. Again, the area where this is of paramount importance is in the Francophone community. As reported by the agencies in Québec, these agencies have demonstrated expertise in managing the shortage of interpreters by the impressive ability to maintain above 90 percent fulfillment of all interpreter requests. Therefore, the comments and advice provided by these organizations earlier in this report should be considered when implementing VRS in Canada.

Managing potential shortages could also in part be accomplished through subcontracting arrangements or simply through close collaboration, depending on the model chosen for VRS in Canada. Furthermore, potential shortages may affect the way in which VRS is initially implemented and phased in over time (e.g. hours of availability, type of services offered).

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[167] Questionnaire responses from AVLIC

[168] See Section 3.3.3

[169] Provincial Review of ASL/Deaf studies and interpreter education in BC, Gordon, M.G.; Hardy, M. Dec 2009 pg. 6

INTERPRETER CONSIDERATIONS

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

Professional interpreter organizations, service referral agencies, and interpreter training programs, and other organizations consulted for this study's Phase 6 research are provided as Appendix A to this report, as follows:

INTERPRETER TRAINING PROGRAMS

1. Douglas College – Program of Sign Language Instruction
   New Westminster, British Columbia
   Cheryl Palmer, Coordinator
   Nigel Howard, Instructor
   Sara MacFayden, Instructor

2. Red River College/University of Manitoba
   Winnipeg, Manitoba
   Rick Zimmer, Coordinator, Deaf Studies and ASL-English Interpretation Program
   Dr. Terry Janzen, Dept. Of Linguistics

3. George Brown College – ASL-English Interpreter Program
   Toronto, Ontario
   Corene Kennedy, ASL-English Interpreter Coordinator
   Phyllis Beaton-Vasquez, Professor and Curriculum Review Leader
   Nancy T. Blanchard, Professor

4. Nova Scotia Community College
   Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
   Denise Smith, Coordinator
   Jana Delaney-Wilson, Faculty

5. Cegep du Vieux Montréal
   Montreal, Québec
   Emile B.-Levesque, Coordinator
   Brigitte Clermont, Instructor

6. Université du Québec à Montréal
   Montreal, Québec
   Anne-Marie Parisot, Professor and Program Director
   Suzanne Villeneuve, Professor

7. Canadian Hearing Society – Internship Program
   Toronto, Canada
   Sheila Johnston, Provincial Manager

8. École St. Jude – Cued Speech
   Kathleen Bull, Coordinator

9. Viseme- Oral Interpreting
   Québec
   Marie-Josee Paradis, President
   Mireille Beaudoin, Vice-President

10. Lakeland College/University of Alberta[170]
    Kirk Ferguson
    Debra Russell

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC)
   Christie Reaume, President

2. Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI)
   Jessica Siegers, President
   Nicole Pedneault, Professional Development Chair
   Robyn Albert, Professional Standards Chair

3. Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Alberta (ASLIA)
   ASLIA Board of Directors

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[170] Declined participation due to illness of faculty chairperson. Debra Russell provided information about size of cohort and number of graduates.

SERVICE REFERRAL AGENCIES

1. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society (DHHS)
   Calgary, Alberta
   Duane Gillissie, Manager of Interpreting Services

2. Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
   Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
   Jerry Markin, Manager of Communications

3. Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) at Canadian Hearing Society (CHS)
   Toronto, Ontario
   Cheryl Wilson, OIS Director
   Beverly Dooley, Provincial Manager, Service Delivery and Operations

4. Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians
   Nova Scotia
   Frank O'Sullivan, Executive Director
   Rosalind Wright, Regional Manager Cape Breton
   Betty MacDonald, Deaf Community Member
   Cindy Boutilier, Interpreter Services Coordinator

5. Service d'interprétation pour personnes sourdes de l'Estrie (SIPSE)
   Sherbrooke, Québec
   Joanne Deschenes, Director

6. Service régional d'interprétariat de Lanaudière (SRIL)
   Joliette, Québec
   Diane Miron, Coordinator
   Christine Desjardins, Instructor

7. Service régional d'interprétariat de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (SRIAT)
   Rouyn-Noranda, Québec
   Rémy Mailloux, General Director
   Ginette Massicotte, Manager of Interpreting Services

8. Service d'aide à l'intégration des élèves (SAIDE)
   Montréal, Québec
   Emile B.-Levesque, Coordinator
   Brigitte Clermont, Instructor

9. Service d'interprétation visuelle et tactile (SIVET)
   Montréal, Québec
   Natalie Baril, Director of Interprétation

10. Service régional d'interprétariat de l'Est du Québec (SRIEQ)
    Québec
    Denise Thibault, Director

11. Service régional d'interprétation visuelle de l'Outaouais (SRIVO)
    Gatineau, Québec
    Giles Gauthier, President
    David Joseph, Treasurer/Secretary

12. Western Institute Deaf and Hard of Hearing[171]
    Vancouver, British Columbia
    Janice Lyons

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

1. British Columbia VRS Committee
   Vancouver, BC
   Lisa Anderson, Communications Officer
   Nigel Howard, CRTC Liaison
   Sarah Hrycenko, Alberta-BC groups Liaison

2. University of Alberta
   Edmonton, Alberta
   Debra Russell, Chair of Deaf Studies

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[171] Did not complete questionnaire; provided comments.

3. Centre Communautaire des Sourds de l'Est du Québec

   Jacques Boudreault

4. Centre de la communauté sourde du Montréal Métropolitain (CCSMM)

5. CQDA

   Monique Therrien

SURVEYED – NO RESPONSE

1. Association of Visual Interpreters New Brunswick
2. Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters
3. Newfoundland Association of Visual Language Interpreters
4. Ontario Association of Visual Language Interpreters
5. Maritime Association of Professional Sign Language Interpreters[172]
6. SLINC Sign Language Interpreters of the National Capitol
7. Sign Language Interpreting Associates Ottawa (SLIAO)
8. Academic Interpreters of Ottawa (AIO)

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[172] Participated in the Consumer Survey Town Hall held in Nova Scotia.