


**WASLI**  
WORLD ASSOCIATION OF  
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS



## Interpreters and WASLI

Deb Russell  
WASLI President

Panama  
April 2012

### Deb Who?

- Interpreter – 30 years
- Age 19 university meet Deaf Learn sign
  - Canada non school interpreter
  - Deaf community my school
  - STILL my school
  - Work interpreter – President AVLIC
  - Len Mitchell CAD President = learn union
  - back university Teacher – disability
  - Finish = teach disability –Establish Interpreter program – teach there
  - Now Interpreter, teacher, researcher university

### What is WASLI?

**WASLI is a volunteer organisation that aims to:**

- Be a support network for sign language interpreters worldwide
- Encourage the establishment of national associations of interpreters in countries that do not have them
- Work in partnership with Deaf and Deafblind Associations on sign language interpreting issues



### WASLI Beginnings...

- 2005 – Founding Conference in Worcester, South Africa
  - 150 delegates, 44 countries
- 2007 - Segovia, Spain (match time/country with WFD)
  - 200 delegates, 56 countries
- 2011 - Durban, South Africa (with WFD)
  - 170 delegates, 69 countries

### WASLI board 2007-2011



### Durban South Africa 2011





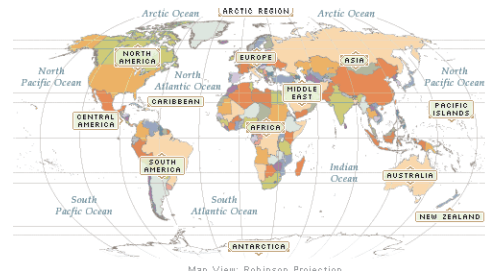
WASLI Spain 2007



WASLI 2005



WASLI World – 8 regions



WASLI in Panama City



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Latin America Rep



### WASLI Vice President



### WFD & WASLI Agreement



### Agreement with WFD & WASLI 2007 Spain:

- *Signed agreement with WFD to work collaboratively on all aspects of shared work*
- *Hold Conferences in Same Country/Time*
- *Produced shared documents outlining hiring standards for interpreters at international conferences & UN events*

### WFD & WASLI President



### WFD & WASLI Current Project:

*Focus on Communication in Natural Disasters*

3 Papers for Gov't's, Deaf Associations and Interpreters

Ex: earthquake – New Zealand  
tsunami - Japan



### WASLI Website Services

- Newsletter
- Calendar of Events Worldwide
- Training Institutions
- Joint Agreements – NAD's/NIA's
- Photo Gallery
- Publications – Conference Proceedings
- Sample Code of Ethics
- Educational Guidelines
- Research & References

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WASLI Translation Dept

Network of volunteers:  
Arabic  
Russian  
Spanish  
Portuguese  
Korean

If you can volunteer to work in another written language, contact Rafael Trevino at [translation@wasli.org](mailto:translation@wasli.org)

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WASLI International Sign Translation Dept

Goal to Establish Network of volunteers to create IS versions of document, include IS on website

If you can volunteer to work in IS, contact Christopher Stone & Robert Adam c/o [president@wasli.org](mailto:president@wasli.org)

**WASLI Current Issues**

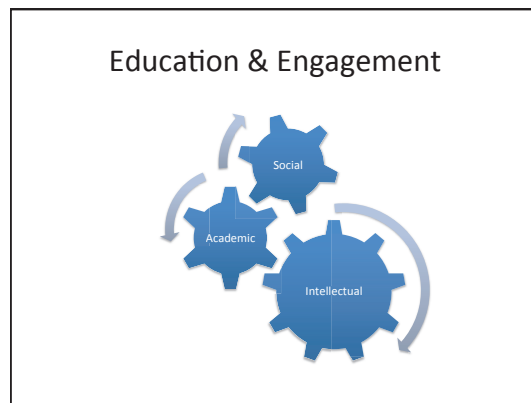
- Arab region?
  - Unification of Arab Sign Language – WFD/WASLI same position
- Latin America
  - Communication, translation of materials, training of interpreters
- India – Asia – culture different same region
  - Appointed 2 reps from India and Japan
- Testing/Certification for interpreters
  - Position paper

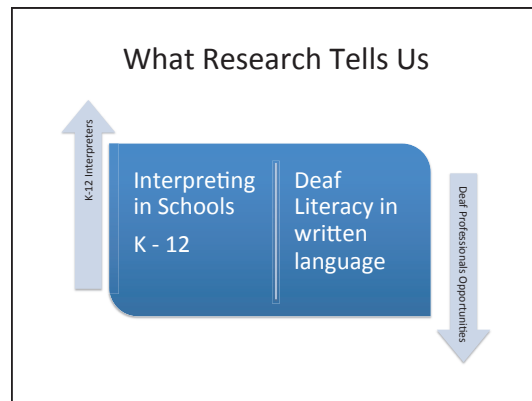
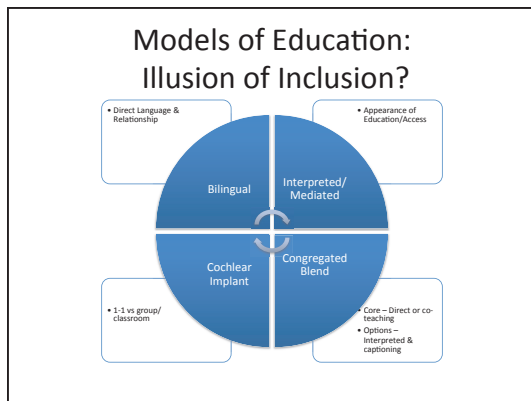
**Issues in WASLI & WFD Education for Deaf Children**

- Yesterday: Focus on interpreting in schools, K – 12
- Important: WASLI – WFD support access for **Bilingual Education**
  - Means Deaf Teachers – Direct access to students
  - Interpreting for Deaf students – University, post secondary AFTER solid language foundation
  - Research on mediated education – PROBLEMS+++

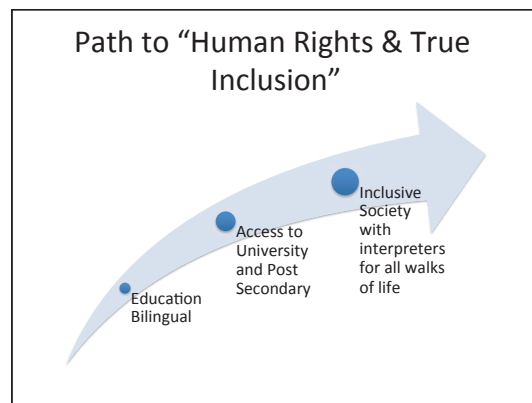
**Mediated vs. Direct Education**

- Russell (2007, 2010, in press)
- For whom & What Context does mediated education work well?
- Natural Language acquisition
  - Cannot happen via interpreting
- Active participation in classroom vs. bystander
  - Intellectual engagements
  - Social engagement
  - Cognitive engagement





- ### Cambio de paradigma
- Evidence Based Practices
  - Research about education vs. same old thing
    - Inclusion – one size fits all?
    - Interpreters – wrong path internationally?
  - Find way back to research & support for bilingual education
    - Illusion of Inclusion vs. TRUE inclusion
    - Inclusion in Society based on solid education



- ### Training of Interpreters
- WASLI document:
    - An approach for interpreter educators working in other countries
    - Number one request we get is for information about how to train interpreters
    - International committee over 2009-2011 created philosophical statement and suggested structure

- ### Key Points of Education Paper
- WASLI is committed to the advancement of the n of signed language interpreting worldwide.
  - Interpreter educators from countries with established interpreter education will collaborate with educators from countries where interpreter training is not available or is newly developing.

### How We Will Work Together

- Educators work together to design effective practices and deliver quality education that recognises and incorporates local expertise in the cultural, linguistic, social and political conditions that affect teaching and practising signed language interpreting in that country.

### Stakeholders for Training

- Experienced international educators will collaborate with relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to:
  - Deaf and hearing community members, Deaf and hearing interpreters, national Deaf and Deaf-Blind organisation representatives, spoken language community and translation/interpreting.
  - organisation representatives, government representatives, and educational-institution representatives.

### The Goal

- The goal of collaboration: ensure accessibility, relevance and effectiveness of training in diverse contexts while maintaining the integrity of **national signed languages**, customs and norms.
- MEANS: Need Sign Language **Research 1<sup>st</sup> Step**

### Interpreter Training without Signed Language Research

- No Research:
  - Teach language from WORD – SIGN level
  - Means Interpreters graduate without natural language use
  - Not meet needs of Deaf people for their diverse needs throughout life time
  - Natural Language Use

### Long Term Training Outcomes

- The aim of these collaborative efforts is the development of expertise and empowerment of local personnel
  - Local people:
    - to lead the establishment of interpreter education in their respective countries and to support existing and developing national associations of signed language interpreters.

### Similar to UNCRDP

- The recognition of, respect for and incorporation of linguistic and cultural values throughout the process are imperative to the success of all activities.
- Yesterday, presentations on Human Rights and elimination of discrimination

### Training Models

- Many examples around world
  - Kosovo
  - Mexico
  - Colombia
  - Kenya
  - New Zealand
  - Malaysia

### Language First, Interpreting Second

- Need to support the development of teaching national signed language first
- Common Steps:
  - Recognize Language
  - Signed Language Research (ex: Ukraine 4 Deaf community researchers = 4 non-deaf linguists)
  - Develop Teachers & Curriculum
  - Document the signed language(s) & Regional Variation

### Deaf Studies Courses

- Advanced Sign Language Classes
- Advanced Linguistics of Local Sign Language
- Deaf Culture
- Advanced Spoken Language Classes
- Service to Deaf Community

### Interpreting Classes

- Comparative Linguistics
- Introduction to Professional Practice
- Translation & Discourse Analysis
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpreting Skills & Techniques
  - Dialogue/monologues/1-1/small groups

### Interpreting Classes

- Ethics and Decision Making
- Internships
- Specialized Settings (per local demands)
- Working with Deaf Interpreters

### Three Stage Model for Developing Training

1. Pilot development & Delivery
2. Consolidation & Mentored Delivery
3. Local Ownership and Sustainability

### Phase 1: Pilot Development & Delivery

- Develop & trial curriculum with 1<sup>st</sup> cohort
- International teachers collaborate with local advisors and stakeholders
- Develop & trial resources
- Advocate for use and employment of interpreters
- Evaluate program

### Phase 2: Consolidation & Mentored Delivery

- Repeat delivery
- Mentored co-teaching: experiences teachers with local graduates & others
- Refine curriculum & resources
- Build links with consumers, employers, practitioners
- Evaluate program

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### Phase 3: Local Ownership

- Repeat Delivery
- Teaching done by locals
- On-going program refinement
- Consolidate links with stakeholders:
  - Deaf consumers, service agencies, interpreters
- Evaluate program

### Training – Broad or Specific

- Training for adults?
- Community based?
- Education?
  - Specialized skills after general education?
    - Child Language Acquisition

### Assessment of Interpreters

- Training first...screening/assessment second
- Many models:
  - Strongly encourage you to do it WITH organizations of Deaf people
  - AVLIC & CCSD & CAD vs. RID & NAD experience
  - Options for format
  - Consult with with specific expertise in testing of sign language interpreters



### Consult Widely BEFORE

- Consult communities:
  - Expectations for test
  - Decisions on content areas, language diversity to be represented on test, types of scenarios
  - Screening – less than 45 minutes
  - National certification – Written and Performance
  - Competencies identified
  - Marking rubrics

### Paths of Accreditation



### Resources

- Australia, UK, Canada, USA
- Certification Options: With Spoken Language Interpreters processes or with Interpreters Association
- Certification different from Screening Tools:
  - ex: Interpreter Referral Services
- See:
  - WASLI Website
  - Russell & Malcolm in Angelelli & Jacobsen (2009) volume on testing in interpretation and translation

### Interpreting Services

- Different models around world
  - Individual contractors
  - Interpreter agencies run by Deaf organizations or interpreters
  - Businesses combining spoken and signed language interpreters

### What Can You Do With WASLI: Locally and Globally

- Join as individual member
- Support Deaf community locally
- Strengthen your interpreting community
- Be the BEST interpreter you can be
- Serve on committees, locally & globally
- Share Knowledge & Resources

### Ex: Fiji and Solomon Islands: Creating Opportunities Fund



Latin America: Creating Opportunities  
with Deaf Associations?



WASLI wishes you all the best  
with this exciting conference

For more information visit the WASLI website:

[www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org)

[WASLI Facebook](#)

[WASLI YouTube](#)

*Questions or suggestions?*

Please email [president@wasli.org](mailto:president@wasli.org)

