



---

**Identifying Effective Practices:  
Survey Results of Mentees/Protégés**

---

**National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC)  
Mentoring Team  
December, 2007**

## Identifying Effective Practices: Survey Results of Mentees/Protégés

The survey, “Identifying Effective Practices: Mentee/Protégé,” consisted of 74 questions and was carefully written to accurately assess the needs of interpreting Mentees/Protégés nationally. People were encouraged through press releases, emails, and announcements to complete the survey, which was posted online for more than 30 days at [www.zoomerang.com/mentee](http://www.zoomerang.com/mentee). A complementary survey targeting mentors was in progress at the same time. Results from the mentor survey are documented, as well.

In the introduction to the Master Mentor Program at Northeastern University, mentors are affirmed as capacity builders and skill multipliers “who know how to guide adult learners in a life long process of professional self-discovery.” It also states that “Interpreters paired with mentors learn to assess their own skills and to set clear targets for themselves. They can also apply techniques that have been modeled by their mentors to support skill enhancement in their colleagues.” The questions in this survey were geared towards discovering which techniques utilized by mentors led to the greatest satisfaction and advancement in mentees, and which methods of guidance most closely achieved the goal of building capacity and skill.

### **Part I: About You (Demographics)**

A total of 138 people from across the United States responded to the survey. The largest number of respondents was female, hearing, Euro-American/White and listed English as their first language. In contrast, only a small percentage was male, deaf; hard of hearing, and listed American Sign Language as their first language. A small scattering of individuals identified themselves as African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), and other.

The age of respondents were spread out fairly even, with a slight increase (15%) in the age group 24 and under, and a more marked decrease in the age groups 56-60 (3%), and 61-65 (2%). 14% of respondents identified themselves as 36-40; 22% as 25-30; 10% as 31-35; 12% between the ages of 41-45; 11% were 46-50; and 11% were 51-55.

The largest group of respondents (42%) listed BA/BS as their highest educational degree awarded, and the second largest group (29%) listed AA/AS degrees. 1% of respondents listed GED, and doctorate as their highest educational degree awarded. Those with high school diplomas (9%), those currently in college (12%), and those with MA/MS (7%) had a much closer distribution. Although almost half of the respondents (49%) earned degrees in some form of interpreting, i.e., English/ASL Interpreting, Educational Interpreter Certificate program, Interpreting and Linguistics, and Interpreter Training and Communicative Disorders, other respondents earned degrees in educational disciplines that ranged dramatically from areas such as Humanities, Theater, Early Childhood Education, Business Administration, Psychology, and Community and Regional Planning and Architecture. Only 37 people replied to the question on online courses. Of the 37, 43% of those respondents answered “none” or “not applicable.”

Respondents came from all over the continental United States. They are shown divided by the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Center Regions as follows:

<b>The CATIE Center at the College of St. Catherine</b>	
Indiana	1
Kansas	3
Minnesota	18
Missouri	2
Ohio	10
Wisconsin	4

<b>Gallaudet University Regional Interpreter Education Center</b>	
Alabama	3
Florida	2
Kentucky	3
Maryland	7
North Carolina	4
Pennsylvania	4
Tennessee	7
Virginia	4

<b>Northeastern University Regional Interpreter Education Center</b>	
Maine	2
Massachusetts	3
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	5
New York	7
Vermont	2

<b>Mid-America Regional Interpreter Education Center</b>	
Arkansas	1
Louisiana	2
Montana	2
New Mexico	4
South Dakota	3
Oklahoma	1
Texas	4
Wyoming	1

<b>Western Region Interpreter Education Center</b>	
Alaska	1
Arizona	1
California	3
Nevada	1
Oregon	1

There were 98 respondents to the question on certification level with over half (55%) indicating they held no certification, 30% holding an RID certification, and 10% holding NAD certification. When asked about other diagnostic quality assessments, 74 people responded, 14% with no other assessment, 46% with EIPA, and the remainder holding credentials through a variety of state screening/assessment tools.

The majority (73%) of respondents report that their primary role is that of an interpreter.

When asked about primary employment, the top four responses were as follows:

<b>Primary employment</b>		
Elementary/secondary education	53	39%
Post-secondary institution	30	22%
Other	29	21%
Self-employed	20	15%

Of the 29 responses listed as “other,” 5 are working as video relay interpreters and 15 reported that they are not yet working as interpreters.

A strong majority (83%) of respondents are members of RID, 23% are members of NAD, and 56% noted membership in “other” interpreting-related membership organizations, most of those being RID state affiliate chapters. Seven people listed membership in NAOBI.

## **Part II: About Your Past and Current Mentorship Experience**

At ninety one percent, the majority of respondents stated that they had engaged in a mentorship experience, with forty five percent of those stating that they had participated in two – three mentorship experiences. An overwhelming number of respondents (79%) stated they referred to themselves as a mentee rather than a protégé, but some listed such references as student, intern, mentor/mentee, etc.

When asked how they learned about the mentor(s) they had worked with, most (39%) stated that they had either been referred by an educator (32%) or the mentor was the educator of courses or the program where they were enrolled (29%). In contrast, only seven percent of respondents said they were referred by a Deaf person and only nine percent said the mentor was assigned unknown to them. Other interpreters were a good source for mentors, since twenty four percent learned about mentors through this avenue, and in twenty one percent of cases, the mentor was a peer.

<b>What factors did/do you consider when selecting a mentor? (check all that apply)</b>	
availability	69%
geographic location	52%
certification	52%
certain number of years in the field	44%
referred by trusted individual	39%
price is right	16%
letters of reference	1%
academic degree	7%
mentor is known to be nurturing and supportive	53%
mentor is known to be patient and respectful	57%
mentor has ample teaching experience	32%
mentor is known to be skilled in a specialty area	40%

When asked what factors were considered when selecting a mentor, respondents were also asked to check all the statements that applied. Availability was by far the main factor considered (69%) when selecting a mentor. The fact that the mentor was known to

be patient and respectful (57%), the mentor was nurturing and supportive (53%), the mentor held certification (52%) and the geographic location of the mentor (52%) were highly rated factors, as well. Other highly rated factors were that the mentor had a certain number of years in the field (44%), the mentor is known to be skilled in a specialty area (40%), and the mentor was referred by a trusted individual (39%). At 32%, the mentor having ample teaching experience was another less highly rated factor, but still to be considered important. Only one percent considered letters of reference and only seven percent considered academic degree when selecting a mentor. Price did also not seem to be a factor with most respondents, as only sixteen percent selected this as being important. The “other” category received 20% of the responses, with comments such as, “the mentor was assigned to me,” the mentor was Deaf,” and that the mentor was a part of the mentorship program they were involved with.

What top three factors are most important to you when selecting your mentor(s)?	
availability	46%
geographic location	29%
certification	31%
certain number of years in the field	17%
referred by trusted individual	24%
price was right	6%
letters of reference	0%
academic degree	2%
mentor is known to be nurturing and supportive	46%
mentor is known to be patient and respectful	42%
mentor has ample teaching experience	21%
mentor is known to be skilled in a specialty area	34%

Responses regarding what factors were considered, and what factors were most important to respondents differed somewhat. Although availability was by far the main factor *considered* (69%) when selecting a mentor, the two main factors listed as the *most important* were availability and the fact that the mentor was known to be nurturing and supportive (46% each). Another highly rated factor was that the mentor was known to be patient and respectful (42%). Other factors that rated highly, but less so, included that the mentor is known to be skilled in a specialty area (34%), the certification of the mentor (31%), and the geographic location of the mentor (29%). The facts that the mentors were referred by trusted individuals and the mentor has ample teaching experience, and the mentor practiced for a certain number of years in the field were important factors, but did not rate as highly as those previously mentioned (24%, 21%, and 17%, respectively). Price did also not seem to be much of a factor with most respondents, as only six percent selected this as being important. Only two percent considered an academic degree as important when selecting a mentor and nobody considered letters of reference as important. Again, although availability was by far the main factor considered when selecting a mentor, the top three factors most important to respondents when selecting a mentor(s) were availability of the mentor, the fact that the mentor is known to be nurturing and supportive, and the fact that the mentor is known to be patient and respectful. Again, nobody listed letters of reference as important, and only two percent of the respondents listed academic degree as important.

### Part III: The Most Meaningful Mentorship Experiences vs. the Least Meaningful Mentorship Experiences

An overwhelming majority (96%) responded that they have had a meaningful mentorship experience. This means only four percent have had only negative experiences. When people were asked, however, if they've had any negative mentorship experiences, thirty six responded that they have had a negative experience (125 individuals responded regarding their most meaningful mentorship, whereas only 48 individuals responded regarding their least meaningful mentorship). Sixty three percent of these stated their experience was excellent, and thirty one percent listed it as good. Only five percent rated their experience as fair and only one percent listed it as poor. In contrast, 33% of the 48 respondents rated their experience as fair, 27% rated it as poor and 23% rated it as very poor. Even though respondents were referring to their least meaningful experiences, 15% considered it to be good nevertheless, and 2% considered it to be excellent nevertheless.

<b>For what length of time was your <i>most</i> meaningful mentorship? What was the length of time for your <i>least</i> meaningful mentorship?</b> (Responses for <i>most</i> meaningful mentorship in black; Responses for <i>least</i> meaningful mentorship in red)	
one time event	2%
one time event	9%
multi-session*	18%
multi-session*	11%
1-3 months	25%
1-3 months	52%
4-6 months	24%
4-6 months	15%
7-12 months	19%
7-12 months	11%

The table above represents the responses received regarding the length of time of both the most meaningful and least meaningful mentorships (responses regarding the least meaningful experiences are in red). Most mentorship experiences continued for one to three months (25% regarding most meaningful mentorships; 52% regarding least meaningful mentorships), or up to six months (24% regarding meaningful mentorships; only 15% regarding least meaningful mentorships). Nineteen percent of respondents (most meaningful) and 11% of respondents (least meaningful) were involved in mentorships that lasted up to twelve months in length. Only two percent of the respondents were involved in a one-time event or experience. Interestingly, some people were involved in mentorships for as short a period as two weeks (least meaningful), and others for over 11 years.

There was a close distribution of responses regarding when the mentorship experience occurred, but regarding most meaningful mentorships most (35%) replied that it took place within the past six months. Twenty eight percent stated their mentorship experience occurred more than two years ago and twenty percent said approximately one year ago. When asked when the least meaningful mentorship experiences occurred, the

highest response was more than two years ago (40%), the second highest was in the past 6 months (28%), followed closely by 1-2 years ago (23%).

Many of the responses to the “least meaningful mentorship experience” were the same as those of the “most meaningful.” The largest number of respondents regarding the most meaningful mentorships stated that they met individually (one-on-one) (69%) with hearing mentors (69%) on a weekly basis (42%) for one to three months (25%). Similarly, those responding regarding the least meaningful mentorships stated that they met individually (60%), on a weekly basis (36%), with only hearing mentors (71%), for one to three months (52%).

Seventy three percent of those responding about their most meaningful experiences and sixty four percent of those responding about their least meaningful experiences indicated that they were not required to participate in a mentorship activity as part of their employment. When asked about the requirements involved in the mentorship experience, the top two selections were completion of homework assignments (38% for most meaningful; 56% for least meaningful) and completion of a minimum number of hours (46% for most meaningful; 51% for least meaningful). When asked how payment was handled, the top two responses were that there was no money involved in the mentorship experience (49% for most meaningful; 38% for least meaningful) and that an employer paid for the mentorship experience (17% for most meaningful; 24% for least meaningful).

One noticeable difference between responses to the questions about the most meaningful experiences and the least meaningful experiences was in the area of the type of mentoring services received. In the “most meaningful” section, the highest response was that programs were structured with set goals and objectives (43%); were less structured, and more flexible (32%). In the “least meaningful” section, 38% of respondents listed that as second to 44% reporting that they received little or no structure with goals set at each session. In the “most meaningful” section, only 20% stated they received little or no structure with goals set at each session.

<b>What was the approach/philosophy used during this mentorship?</b> (Responses for <i>most</i> meaningful mentorship in black; Responses for <i>least</i> meaningful mentorship in red)	
mentee/protégé-centered	56%
mentee/protégé-centered	27%
mentor-directed	15%
mentor-directed	40%
peer-directed	14%
peer-directed	16%

Another section where there was a clear distinction between the most and least meaningful responses was in the question regarding the approach/philosophy used during the mentorship. In the most meaningful section, 56% of respondents listed that the approach/philosophy was mentee/protégé-centered and only 15% stated it was mentor-directed. In contrast, of those responding about the least meaningful relationships, 40%

stated the approach/philosophy was mentor centered, and 27% stated it was mentee/protégé-centered.

In the most meaningful mentorship experiences, most respondents (81%) stated the format in which their mentorship was carried out was face-to-face discussion. Sixty percent were carried out through mentor observation of mentee/protégé in real-life setting and 55% through review of video/DVD interpretations of individual. The format of the least meaningful experiences came out fairly evenly across the top three responses with 48% using observation in real life settings, 45% reviewing interpretations on video/DVD, and 41% using face-to-face discussion.

When asked in which venues the mentorship took place, respondents were asked to check all the statements that applied. The majority selected educational institutions (63% for “most meaningful;” 64% for “least meaningful”). The distant second place selection was human services/community based facilities (27% for “most meaningful;” 16% for “least meaningful”) with an equal number of respondents for “least meaningful” listing VRS/VRI agency (16%). Third runner up for “most meaningful” was public venue, i.e., restaurant, club, etc. (24%) and for “least meaningful” was online (16%).

<b>What were your top three expectations of the mentor/mentee/protégé relationship in this particular mentorship experience?</b> (Responses for <i>most</i> meaningful mentorship in black; Responses for <i>least</i> meaningful mentorship in red)	
I expected the mentor to be a role model, and lead me by example.	41%
<b>I expected the mentor to be a role model, and lead me by example.</b>	<b>48%</b>
I expected the mentor to educate me on my weaknesses and strengths.	52%
<b>I expected the mentor to educate me on my weaknesses and strengths.</b>	<b>50%</b>
I expected the mentor to tell me what I needed to do to improve my skills.	53%
<b>I expected the mentor to tell me what I needed to do to improve my skills.</b>	<b>46%</b>
I expected the mentor to observe me and write a report.	5%
<b>I expected the mentor to observe me and write a report.</b>	<b>15%</b>
I expected the mentor to guide me in exploring my own strengths and weaknesses and helping me to learn to improve those on my own.	63%
<b>I expected the mentor to guide me in exploring my own strengths and weaknesses and helping me to learn to improve those on my own.</b>	<b>52%</b>
I expected the mentor to work on interpretations with me, both of us offering feedback to each other.	26%
<b>I expected the mentor to work on interpretations with me, both of us offering feedback to each other.</b>	<b>26%</b>
I expected the mentor to provide me with tools and resources.	32%
<b>I expected the mentor to provide me with tools and resources.</b>	<b>22%</b>
I expected the mentor to set the goals and structure of the mentorship.	11%
<b>I expected the mentor to set the goals and structure of the mentorship.</b>	<b>7%</b>
I expected the mentor to listen to my goals and work with me on structuring the mentorship.	32%
<b>I expected the mentor to listen to my goals and work with me on structuring the mentorship.</b>	<b>26%</b>

In the section on expectations of the mentor/mentee relationship, mentees were asked to select their top three expectations. The top two responses for both “most meaningful,” and “least meaningful” were that they expected the mentor to guide them in exploring

their own strengths and weaknesses and helping them to learn to improve those on their own (63% for “most meaningful,” 52% for “least meaningful”), and that they expected the mentor to educate them on their weaknesses and strengths (53% for “most meaningful,” 50% for “least meaningful”). The third top choice differed slightly. Fifty two percent of respondents regarding “most meaningful,” listed that they expected the mentor to educate them on their weaknesses and strengths, and 48% of respondents regarding “least meaningful” stated they expected the mentor to be a role model, and lead them by example.

When asked if the expectations of the mentorship was met/achieved, 54% of those responding to the most meaningful mentorships stated that it far exceeded their expectations, and 34% stated that it did not fully meet their expectations but it was beneficial nevertheless. On the contrary, 67% of those responding about their least meaningful experience stated that the mentorship failed in meeting their expectations.

By far, the top response regarding the primary goal of the most meaningful mentorship was to improve interpretation skills (40%). A distant 25% listed their goal as to be better prepared to take a certification exam. Among those responding regarding the least meaningful mentorship, there was a fairly close distribution of the top three responses to the question about primary goal for the mentorship. These included to improve interpretation skills (29%), to be better prepared for a certification exam (27%) and to receive direct feedback on strengths and weaknesses (20%). Only 2% of the respondents regarding the least meaningful and only 1% regarding the most meaningful mentorship stated they didn't have any expectations of the mentorship experience.

Again, it's not surprising that 46% of those responding regarding most meaningful mentorship reported the primary goal was reached and more and 29% stated that the primary goal was met. It is also not surprising that 59% of the respondents regarding the least meaningful mentorship reported that the mentorship failed in meeting the goal, and 27% stated that the primary goal was not fully met.

Respondents were asked to choose the top three reasons contributing to the experience being the most successful or the least meaningful. Responses for both will be handled separately since the choices for each were different.

<b>In your estimation, what top three factors contributed to the success of this mentorship?</b>	
motivation of mentor	52%
motivation of mentee/protégé	64%
compatibility between mentor and mentee/protégé	69%
objectives and expectations clearly understood	36%
financial support provided	8%
compatible schedules	21%
geography	7%
professional or personal priorities remained consistent	31%

The top three factors contributing to the success of the mentorship were listed as compatibility between mentor and mentee/protégé (69%), motivation of the mentee/protégé (64%), and motivation of the mentor (52%). Next in line, at 36%, was

that the objectives and expectations were clearly understood, and at 31%, that the professional or personal priorities remained consistent. The ratings that received the lowest number of responses were geography at 7% and financial support provided at 8%. Some interesting factors were listed in the “other” category, including “daily access to mentor via internet Web CT,” “Clarity of goals by mentee followed up by mentor,” and “working together in real life situations.”

<b>In your estimation, what top three factors contributed to this least meaningful mentorship?</b>	
time constraints/scheduling	43%
lack of motivation on the part of the mentor	55%
lack of motivation on the part of the mentee/protégé	9%
geography	11%
financial restrictions	0%
change in priorities	9%
incompatibility between mentor and mentee/protégé	45%
lack of understanding of expectations	48%

The top three factors contributing to the least meaningful mentorship were listed as lack of motivation on the part of the mentor (55%), lack of understanding of expectations (48%), and incompatibility between mentor and mentee/protégé (45%). Time constraints/scheduling (43%) were also rated highly as contributing to the least meaningful mentorship. Participants were also given the opportunity to select other and write in a response. Those included several on the lack of availability/contact/involvement from the mentor and the mentor just not being skilled enough.

<b>Most Meaningful Mentorship:</b>	
<b>Which of the following statements apply to this mentorship experience? (check all that apply)</b>	
The mentorship was beneficial to my personal growth.	62%
The mentorship was beneficial to my professional growth.	95%
The mentorship enhanced my interpreting skills.	87%
The mentorship improved my ethical decision making skills.	47%
The mentorship was well-balanced and helped me see areas of skill and areas needing improvement.	68%
The mentorship gave me life-long tools I can use throughout my professional life.	58%
I believe that my understanding of the mentorship process helped contribute to the positive outcome.	50%
I would gladly participate in another mentorship with this mentor or others.	76%

Concluding the most meaningful mentorship portion of the survey, 95% of the respondents stated that the mentorship was beneficial to their professional growth, 87% stated the mentorship enhanced their interpreting skills, and 76% stated that they would gladly participate in another mentorship with this mentor or others. Since respondents were asked to check all that apply, many of the choices were given high ratings.

<b>Least Meaningful Mentorship:</b>	
<b>Which of the following statements apply to this mentorship experience? (check all that apply)</b>	
I came away with new skills and growth despite the fact that it was not a good	36%

experience.	
The mentorship made me feel worthless as an interpreter.	27%
The mentorship was a worthless endeavor.	13%
The mentorship may have been worthwhile if it had been led by a different mentor.	44%
I would never participate in another mentorship.	2%
I would gladly participate in another mentorship with this mentor or others despite the experience.	11%

Forty four percent of the respondents concluded that the least meaningful mentorship may have been worthwhile if it had been led by a different mentor. Thirty six percent did report coming away with new skills and growth despite the fact that it was not a good experience and only 2% stated that they would never participate in another mentorship.

### **Part V: More of Your Thoughts Regarding Mentorship**

The vast majority of respondents (83%) feel that the concept of mentorship is not universally understood. Respondents reported that the top three factors contributing to individuals not utilizing mentor services are 1. not enough trained mentors in the area (67%), 2. lack of understanding of how to obtain a mentor (52%), and 3. lack of understanding of the mentorship process by the mentee/protégé (47%). The fourth and fifth responses, both not far behind at 40%, were a lack of financial resources and inadequate/insufficient advertising of mentorship services.

Participants were asked, given your perceived needs, when would you consider working with a hearing mentor and when would you consider working with a Deaf mentor. The selections offered were for language, for interpreting, and for ethical decision-making. The responses were as follows:

<b>Hearing Mentor</b>	
Interpreting	93%
Ethical decision-making	53%
Language	40%

<b>Deaf Mentor</b>	
Language	91%
Interpreting	57%
Ethical decision-making	51%

Most (75%) of the people surveyed have not served as mentors in the past, but sixty-four percent report that they would like to be trained to serve as a mentor.

The survey results as shown in the preceding pages identify many of the positive and negative experiences of mentees. These results can be used to inform mentors and mentorship program coordinators about activities and aspects of the mentoring relationship that have the most impact on mentees and that make mentorship most effective. The results can also be used to light the way for future mentorship programs and help to guide and improve their development.

© *National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers*

CATIE Center at St. Catherine University

Gallaudet University Regional Interpreter Education Center

Mid-America Regional Interpreter Education Center at University of Arkansas at Little Rock

National Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University

Regional Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University

Western Region Interpreter Education Center at Western Oregon University

The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers is funded from 2005 – 2010 by the U.S. Department of Education RSA CFDA #84.160A and B, Training of Interpreters for Individuals Who Are Deaf and Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind.

Permission is granted to copy and disseminate these documents and video materials for educational purposes, provided that National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers is credited as the source and referenced appropriately on any such copies.