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Spanish 369 Internship

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The Milestone for my Future Interpreting Career:

Final Reflective Essay

The internship for Chesapeake Care Clinic was my first opportunity to professionally interpret for patients with limited English proficiency. I have completed around 142 hours of interpretation in the clinic. During these last couple of hours compared to the first set of hours I have improved my interpreting skills. I have gained a better understanding how an interpreter helps the healthcare system by helping the Hispanic/Latino Community. An experience that gave me a strong sense of becoming a professional interpreter in a healthcare environment.

In the beginning before this opportunity, I was able to interpret for my relatives but never for anyone else. I will admit I was a bit nervous to interpret for someone else. My mindset before becoming an interpreter was the medical terminology. At first it was a bit intimidating for myself to ask the patient or the doctor if I was able to briefly lookup the vocabulary in either Spanish or English if I didn't understand. Or able to find the right translations. Since I didn't have a great understanding on the medical terminology such as medications or illnesses. Before my first interpretation I had looked up common vocabulary that was used. For example, how to ask about

their medical history, or if they have any concerns. Nonetheless with consist of repetition I soon grew accustomed to It by gaining a better understanding on the medical terminology.

I noticed that interpretation was a bit challenging towards the terminology and memorization. For terminology it became difficult for me because of the pronunciation. Since there would be times that my pronunciation wouldn't be as accurate, it can possibly lead the patient to be confused. For instance, I had called a patient if they would like to set up a GYN appointment over the phone since I noticed they were on the waitlist. However, my pronunciation in ginecóloga (GYN) had the patient confused in which I decided to rephrase the question with an explanation. It's one of my solutions if my pronunciation doesn't give them a better understanding, by clarifying to them if they would like to schedule an appointment. As Another challenge that I found myself in was memorization. It was bit challenging to memorize certain key terminology or key information for the patients to fill on the application. An example would be memorizing key terminologies or anatomy in Spanish. I had a doctor wanting to the Spanish word for gallbladder. I didn't know the Spanish terminology, the solution I had come up with was to look up the vocabulary on the website in *WordReference*. One way to avoid these problems would be consist with repetition in order to memorize the vocabulary and pronunciations.

The strategic problems during my internship were the tasks I been given to complete. I have noticed that being an interpreter comes with strategic problems but the ones that stand out is getting back to the patients and who to forward it to. For example, keeping up with the limited English proficiency patients' voicemail via telephone. Listening to the voicemail is key for the

interpreter to understand about their concerns. The solution would be to figure out who to forward the message if its medica concern or if I am able to give the information. I know that with my experiences I am aware on what to avoid the problem on not understanding on to who I should forward it too. Decisions of details I have noticed during interpretation was rephrasing the statement in order for the patient or doctor to understand. I would pay close attention to all the patients to make my decisions based on the details I been given. Additionally, I will notice if the cultural background of the patient is different than mine. For example, I had a patient from a different Latin American country using medical terminology I wasn't aware of. The solution was to look up the vocabulary and look up any corresponding term in Spanish, from then on, I will be able to interpret for the patient. Another example during my time I noticed it's my decision to ask the patient or the doctor for more clarification on their statement. In order to give the most accurate statement in either language.

After hours of interpreting for the clinic, my confidence as an interpreter has improved. With the experiences of being an interpreter as given me a greater understanding on the medical field. Compared to the first day I was a bit nervous to interpret for someone. Worrying the day before that I wouldn't be able to interpret accurately, or I would stumble between my words. After many hours with experience, I no longer experience nervousness, or I can sense that I am confident with my words. Asking questions before seemed difficult for me at first but now I don't mind asking many questions for confirmation that the statements were correct. My overall strong points as an interpreter would be the cultural understanding of the patient and being able to understand them better. By having that background, I will be able to get a better sense in interpreting for them. Another strong point would be asking clarification between the patient and

the doctor. If there was a statement that I overlooked I would ask them to repeat the statement. A weak point that I possibly have would be my memorization. The reason as to why it's a weak point is that I have difficulties remembering vocabulary. Such as memorization vocabulary that I haven't heard. I know that with these points I can improve them with more experience in the future. My opinion has changed before interpreting this semester, because it's the first opportunity I had to interpret professionally. It made me realize about my strong and weak points in interpretation, also how to overcome them. In the beginning I wasn't aware of them but now being aware I'm able to improve it overall.

Considering that I will be interpreter in the near future this experience has given me a glance towards the responsibility of an interpreter. One thing that I would change with the help of the internship would be to broaden my understanding in medical terminology in English such as Gyn, diabetic and many more. Overall, once memorize the medical terminology in Spanish and English the smoother the appointment will go. This experience has definitely given me a positive viewpoint towards interpreters working in the medical field. With constant practice because of the opportunities, I will improve myself, striving to grow my knowledge in both languages.