

COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Community Interpretation in Spanish
Moreno Valley College
2011

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Web Resources:

<http://www.rccd.edu/administration/educationalservices/ieffectiveness/Pages/ProgramReview.aspx>

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COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW
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A. Mission and Relationship to the College(s)

The mission of the Community Interpretation in Spanish Program is to introduce students to the fields of translation and interpreting. Designed for speakers of Spanish and English with native or near-native fluency in both languages, the program provides certificate recipients with a solid foundation in the fundamentals of interpreting and translation. The program prepares students for professional certification exams while offering skills improvement for bilinguals already interpreting in the community.

The mission of the program is related to the mission of Moreno Valley College in that we provide professional and pre-professional training to individuals seeking to apply interpreting skills in the workplace.

B. History

The first CMI course at Riverside Community College was taught during the fall semester of 1995. From the outset and to this day, the program has existed exclusively at Moreno Valley College. As it existed initially, the 18-unit program consisted of three 6-unit courses on interpreting in the medical, legal, and business fields (CMI-71, 81 and 91 respectively). During its early existence, the program was taught by working translators and interpreters who served as adjunct instructors. Courses were also taught by the program originator, who at program inception was a faculty member in the Spanish discipline.

The program existed without a full-time instructor until the fall of 2000 when the current full-time instructor was hired. Two new 4-unit courses were added to the program during the 2002-2003 school year. An Introduction to Translation CMI-61 was taught for the first time in the fall of 2002 and Intermediate Legal Interpreting CMI-82 was taught in the spring of 2003. CMI-61 was developed and proposed in order to provide students the opportunity to focus on the written skills involved in translation (as opposed to the oral interpreting skills practiced in the other courses). CMI-82 was developed to offer students the opportunity to further develop skills in court interpreting and is designed for students who seriously considering a career as a court interpreter.

From 2003 to 2006, further changes and additions to the program were made. CMI-91 Interpreting for Business was reduced from six units to three, its field component was eliminated and its course outline of record was modified to include work in written translation, along with the existing focus on oral interpretation skills. Simultaneously, CMI-61 was reduced from four units to three and was made a graduation requirement for the program. Finally, CMI-72 Intermediate Medical Interpreting was approved in 2005.

The CMI Program has, for many years, relied on assistance from adjunct instructors who have taught all courses except CMI-61. Adjunct instructors have also played an important role in the development and modification of curriculum and on the advisory committee for the CMI Program.

The CMI Program tends to serve a predominantly female population. At any given time, approximately 80% of students are women. Variations in this trend will be discussed in Section C of this report.

During the tenure of the current full-time instructor, the CMI Program has consistently attracted students who are already involved in educational interpreting. A percentage (probably 6-7% of the students enrolled in the program) have experience interpreting in schools and for school districts. These students have indicated a need for training in this type of interpreting. Additionally, students currently studying in the CMI Program inquire about this kind of work, and the full-time instructor has written letters of recommendation for students seeking this work. The program may wish to address this need through new curriculum in the future.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Confirmation of Course Caps

Since the 2009 program review, the program has had occasion to confirm established course caps at thirty (30) students per CMI course. Discussions with the Dean of the Department of Health, Human and Public Services led to temporary increases in the numbers of students allowed to enroll in CMI courses. Higher enrollments were made possible by continued increases in student interest in the program. The increases, however, led to unmanageable numbers of students in the classroom. These increases came about in part because the full-time instructor for the CMI Program was unaware of what the caps actually were. In previous years course caps had not been an issue because courses often did not fill to capacity. As the reputation of the program grew, mostly through word-of-mouth, courses began to fill more steadily. This situation necessitated eventual confirmation of established course caps. It is important to maintain course caps as confirmed in order to maintain the quality and integrity of the CMI Program.

During resolution of the issue of course caps, the full-time instructor for the CMI Program held discussions with adjunct instructors in the CMI Program, full-time instructors from this department and others, union representatives, representatives of the academic senate, and administrators. The participation of all is appreciated by the full-time instructor for CMI.

CMI Club Trip to Spain and Portugal

During the years of 2009-2010, the CMI Club, working with the full-time instructor of the CMI Program, organized a trip to Spain and Portugal. Students were integrally involved in planning the trip, and made considerable fundraising efforts. The trip, which became a reality in April of 2010, was planned to last nine nights, with four nights in Spain and four in Portugal. The trip was funded entirely by participants' own contributions and by monies generated by CMI Club activities. One of the full-time instructors of Spanish at Moreno Valley College participated as co-chaperone and traveled with the group.

Interestingly, the group's itinerary was affected by the eruption of the Icelandic volcano and the attendant disruptions to air travel in European air space. As a result, the group was obliged to remain in Lisbon and extend the trip by almost an entire week. While the extension was somewhat stressful, the trip was certainly educational and memorable to all involved.

The CMI Club trip was the result of the stated goal of the full-time instructor in the 2009 Comprehensive Program Review to increase international involvement of the Program.

Purchase of New Language Lab Equipment

A particularly positive development for the CMI Program has been the recent purchase of a new computer-based language lab system. Through discussions with the Dean of the Health, Human and Public Services Department, funding was secured to obtain the new equipment. Several discussions were held with personnel from Computer Support and from the Instructional Media Center during January and February of 2011 to make the purchases possible. Also included in discussions were full-time faculty from the Spanish program at Moreno Valley College. Proposals were considered from Sony and from Tandberg, the Sony equipment prevailing. The lab, installed in the Parkside complex, building PSC 18, is coming online as of this writing at the beginning of the fall 2011 semester. The lab promises to be of great benefit to students, faculty, and the department.

C. Data Analysis and Environmental Scan

The Comprehensive Program Review from 2009 contains information on the increasing number of requests for information on the program. Since then, the full-time instructor for the CMI Program has not logged the number of requests for information. Generally speaking, however, there has been an increase in the percentage of e-mail, as opposed to phone, requests for information. Many of these requests can be answered in part by providing inquirers with web-based information. Additionally, the full-time instructor for the program has had discussions with the individual who provides orientation information for prospective students in all HH&PS programs. He seeks to have further discussions with her in order to further delegate some of the responsibility for providing the public with information on the program.

Enrollment data shows a constant demand for CMI courses. Data from the 2010 Moreno Valley College Fact Book (pg. 11) for the preceding year of 2009 show a 95.71% fill ratio for the CMI discipline. Fill ratios for individual courses range from 88.57 to 105.71 %. These figures indicate significant student interest in the courses.

Demographically, students in the CMI Program have tended to be predominantly female. Courses of 30 students typically had 2-5 male students. During the current semester however (fall 2011), CMI-81 has seen a significant increase in the number of males. Of thirty students, 14 are male. It remains to be seen whether these numbers will reflect a trend or a temporary anomaly. The increase may be due to an increasingly tight labor market for men.

The 79.0% success rate for the CMI Program cited in the College Fact Book may indicate that certain individuals decide that interpreting is not for them. The rate may also indicate that some

students are not interested in all four of the courses offered by the Program. It is rather common for students to take courses that would indicate a limited interest. For example, students have indicated to me in the past an exclusive interest in medical interpreting. These students, in many cases, do not complete all the CMI courses but rather complete only the course or courses that they are interested in.

Interesting data regarding Translation and Interpreting has been available in recent news media. In a list of 100 recession-proof jobs, Interpreting was cited at approximately number 70 (source missing). A recent Reader's Digest article cites similar information and emphasizes the need for a bachelor's degree (<http://www.rd.com/money/9-recessionproof-careers/>). Under the section on international careers, the Reader's Digest article cites a median income of \$37,000 annual. Most court certified interpreters earn more, especially if they hold both state and federal certification.

Finally, the most recent report from the California Judicial Council Court Interpreter Program cites correlation between education and certification exam pass rates. 78% of those certified in the most recent testing cycle held a bachelor's degree or higher and 91% of those passing professional exams had taken certificate courses or other training in interpreting (<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/cipnews-050611.pdf>). The study also cites work experience as highly correlated to success on exams.

Court interpreting continues to be one of the most lucrative areas for well-qualified interpreters in the U.S. The CMI Program should continue to address this need in its offerings to its strongest students of translation and interpretation studies. Inclusion of internship, work experience or service learning opportunities make a great deal of sense for the Program.

D. Programs and Curriculum

CMI Program curriculum remained unchanged for the period between 2009-2011. The program continues to award an 18-unit certificate for completion of the following courses:

CMI-61	Introduction to Spanish English Translation	3 units
CMI-71	Bilingual Interpreting for the Medical Professions	6 units
CMI-81	Bilingual Interpreting for the Legal Professions	6 units
CMI-91	Introduction to Translation and Interpretation For Business	<u>3 units</u>
Total:		18 units

Note: CMI-71 and CMI-81 include a 54 hour field observation/lab component in which students observe interpreters working in hospitals and courtrooms.

The following course is offered by the CMI program but is not required to receive the program certificate. It is currently recommended for students seeking professional certification as court interpreters.

CMI-82	Intermediate Legal Interpreting	4 units
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It is the opinion of the full-time instructor that CMI curriculum requires attention in several areas. First, the 54 hour field component/TBA lab requirement of CMI-71 and CMI-81 require modification. While the hours are quite useful in student preparation, they could be reduced with no detriment to student learning. Reductions to somewhere between 18 and 24 hours of field observation activities would bring significant efficiencies to the program and would address any issues related to scrutiny of compliance of TBA lab hours.

CMI-82 could be reduced to 3 units and made an elective for termination of the CMI Certificate. This would undoubtedly insure more stable enrollments for that course. Inclusion of electives in the program might also provide room for the creation of a new course in educational interpreting, a field in which many CMI students already work. Additionally, Medical Interpreting CMI-71 might be split into two 3-unit courses, one belonging to core curriculum and one an elective.

The creation of a 1-2 unit introductory course to the program might serve to orient new students and provide a common point of entry. There is a moderate amount of redundancy in the current program structure: students may enter any of the courses and take them in any order. To date, new students often end up sitting next to more seasoned students. Fortunately, these students have tended to pull each other along in a sort of “one-room schoolhouse” environment. Moderate efficiencies might be achieved by providing a common point of entry to the program.

E. Student Outcomes Assessment

Several student learning outcomes assessment projects were undertaken during the spring semester of 2011. Most significantly was the restructuring of CMI-61, Introduction to Translation. The full-time instructor for the course (and program) had experienced problems in prior semesters with students’ inability to produce clean documents on a word processor. This is an integral skill in written translation, the primary focus of the course. In spring 2011 the first 2-3 weeks of the course were dedicated to producing 2 essays, one in Spanish and one in English. Students completed these essays without translating anything, that is, they simply produced two essays and focused on the mechanics of formatting and structuring the two papers. By the time of the third piece of written work, a translation proper, students were able to focus on the task of translating, having already mastered the production of a clean document in either language. The only downside to this shift in approach was that the improvement was made at the cost of a later topic, the translation of passive voice structures. Because of the additional time given to word processing, the group had very limited time to analyze the use and translation of passive voice structures when moving from Spanish to English and vice versa.

In CMI-81 and CMI-91, the approach was adjusted to include greater focus on students’ public speaking skills. Wherever possible, students stood while expressing opinions or while giving oral interpretations. Assessed through student surveys made at the latter part of each course, students agreed overall that standing in class allowed them the opportunity to speak more clearly, at a greater volume, and for the benefit of their peers, as opposed to speaking only to the teacher. Students also agreed that from their perspective as listeners, it was easier to understand their peers when they stood and practiced good public speaking skills. This approach was taken

without detriment to other course SLO's and will therefore be incorporated in the teaching methodology of all CMI courses.

F. Collaboration with other Units

In early December of 2010, the full-time instructor for the CMI Program participated in a project with Sign Language Interpreters at El Camino College in a presentation orienting students of ASL to the field of court interpreting. The project was collaborative both internally and externally in that it was done as part of a grant written by the full-time instructor of ASL at Riverside City College. Her grant included participation from the ASL program at El Camino and the CMI Program at Moreno Valley College. The outcome of the collaboration was that the students of sign language came away with a much greater appreciation for the exigencies of spoken language interpreting as practiced in the courts.

The CMI Program collaborated with Spanish discipline members both at Moreno Valley College and throughout the district at the time of research for the language lab. The CMI full-time instructor held especially valuable conversations on recent online materials with the Chair of World Languages from Norco College.

G. Outreach

A particularly effective recent vehicle for outreach was the screening of the Mexican film, *Presunto culpable*. Organized in collaboration with the California Federation of Interpreters (CFI) the event was held in May 2011 and attracted current students, former students, and professional translators and interpreters. These "friends of the program" enjoyed the opportunity to mix with students and answer their questions regarding the profession. Through the collaboration with CFI, the working professionals who attended earned Continuing Education Units (CEUs) while students received course credit. Students and professionals alike expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet and network.

H. Long Term Major Resource Planning

The most significant resource planning foreseen by the CMI Program at this time is the need for a second full-time instructor position. Expertise sought would include experience in the field of medical interpreting and a strong desire to create internships/service learning opportunities for students.

I. Summary

In the upcoming years, the CMI Program requires attention most urgently in the areas of:

- 1) curricular revision
- 2) identification and retention of qualified adjunct instructors to teach courses.

Ideally, the program will soon hire a second full-time instructor.

The main interest expressed by students in the CMI Program continues to be that of obtaining professional interpreter certification. The reality continues to be that a relatively small percentage of students go on to become professional interpreters. This however, should not be cause for dismay. Those students who do go on to interpret professionally cite that the program has helped them to prepare for their career. Many of these students obtain freelance work interpreting at depositions and medical appointments (in some cases as non-certified interpreters). A smaller percentage becomes court-certified. It is upon these interpreters that the program may need to rely for future instructors. Completion of an additional degree, such as a B.A. or M.A., by these alumni is crucial.

Those students who do not interpret professionally likely use their bilingualism as an ancillary skill in other employment. Tracking these students is more challenging, as they tend not to maintain close ties to the program. Students who work professionally as interpreters (certified or non-certified) tend to maintain closer ties to CMI Program instructors and alumni. In all cases, maintaining and improving contact with program alumni is a priority for the future.

J. Recommendations to the Program Review Committee

(None at this time)

