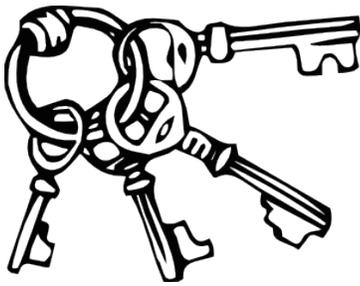


The Mentorship Program is the Key



Last year just around the time when the snow started to stay and it was getting quite cold, I accidentally locked myself out of my house. I had no shoes or jacket on and my

one and a half year-old son was locked inside by himself. I immediately started to panic. I didn't know what to do and needed help in the worst way. After about an hour of trying a pin and screw driver in the lock, trying to yell to my son to open the door and considering throwing a rock through a window, I managed to get my hands on a house key that we had given to our neighbours.

This feeling of panic, not being sure what to do and needing some help is the reasons why the Manitoba Association of Visual Language Interpreters (MAVLI) set up the Mentorship Program for students in the ASL-English Interpretation Program. Each student in the program is paired up with a working interpreter who is also a MAVLI member. This program provides support, encouragement, advice and a person they personally know in the interpreting and Deaf community, a person they can go with to events. That way, the students don't end up feeling panicky about going to events alone, unsure of what the world of interpreting looks like. The program also provides tons of help when students need it during the stressful years of training.

My mentor was a huge support to me. I made a big effort to contact my interpreter mentor because there were so many things I didn't know and I knew they could provide me with the answers. We often went for coffee and I was able to gain insight into jobs for the future, learn more about the field of interpreting and ask my questions to a safe person. When I did graduate my mentor helped me in the process of finding a job and gave me a great reference.

The Mentorship Program is a great resource not only to students but also to the working interpreters who become mentors. Through their students they can learn what changes have occurred in interpreting program, what is current in the education process and can stay connected to the up and coming interpreters who will one day be their colleagues.

My advice to students and to interpreters is to make an effort to get to know each other and take advantage of a potential friendship, support and encouragement that can occur through the Mentorship Program. No one likes to be locked out, on their own, panicking with no help - the MAVLI Mentorship Program is the key.

By Jodi Knox

Top Ten Reasons to Mentor/Supervise Students

10. Two words: future teamer.
9. By providing a positive practicum opportunity for students you are contributing to the continued growth of this field.
8. You develop your own teaming skills as you assess and support the student learning to interpret.
 7. By providing a practicum opportunity, you demonstrate your professional values to colleagues and all consumers, as indicated in tenets 2.4.2 and 4.3.2. of the AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct.
6. Your membership in AVLIC and supervision of a student sends a clear message to the students and they are far more likely to contribute to the organization and the interpreting field.
 5. You will help your organization. Supervising employees can help give your organization a recruitment edge, shorten learning curves, increase your student's job satisfaction and loyalty, and improve productivity and quality.
4. You will feel a sense of pride and satisfaction that comes from seeing your positive contribution to their development as professional interpreters.
 3. You will review and validate what you know and what you have accomplished. Teaching another helps you review and reframe all you have learned about that subject. You will realize that you have accomplished much more than you thought
2. This is a chance to pay it forward. In the past, you were offered the opportunity to be placed with a practicum supervisor and now have an opportunity to reciprocate.
 1. You will learn. By serving as a supervisor (mentor), you will learn from your students. As students, they are currently learning theories and processes that may be new to the field and or updated, of which they are willing to share. In the process of supporting their development, you will also learn more about yourself and your abilities as an interpreter as you assess their work and yours within a given context.

This is a great advantage for those who are considering AVLIC's Test of Interpretation, as the skills you employ as a practicum supervisor aid you in your assessment of your proficiency as well.

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