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## Book Review

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**BOOK REVIEW***Sign Language Interpreting: Exploring its Art and Science*

(Allyn &amp; Bacon, 1998)

by David Stewart, Jerome D. Schein and Brenda Cartwright; \$40.00 - 288 pp.

I admit to a strong preference for fiction when it comes to reading material. When *Sign language interpreting: Exploring its art and science* crossed my desk it took me a while to take it up and to explore what it had to offer between the covers. My previous incarnation as an interpreter seemed lifetimes ago. The topics of my nonfiction pile of books tend to address issues related to psychotherapy and rehabilitation counseling. *Sign language interpreting: Exploring its art and science* stayed in the unread nonfiction pile until a shift in my job responsibilities in a postsecondary education setting sent me scrambling. I suddenly found myself working with interpreters again, though not quite being one of them. I was also working closely with the Deaf students using interpreting services and instructors who were profoundly hearing. Though I could rely on my years of experience to guide me I also felt the need to see what was available in current literature regarding the process.

That's where this new book comes in. *SLI* is an easy to read compilation of material relating to the field of interpreting. It is current and up to date. Reading it I almost always felt that the title should be "Sign language interpreting, a practical manual." The critique I have of the book is that the breadth of the material does not allow for in depth exploration of its art or its science. But the breadth of the book is also its strength. In understandable and clear language this text outlines a brief history of the profession, models of interpreting, physical and psychological factors, the variety of settings that interpreters work in, and a chapter on language and culture. Other chapters focus on the business aspects of the profession, ethics, educational interpreting and last but not least the future! Each chapter provides a spring-board for discussion.

Interpreting is a social process and the outcome depends on all the participants. Another critique I have of the book is that it profiles a number of people and their relationship to interpreting. A hearing non-signing consumer of interpreting services might have rounded out this aspect nicely. But I quibble. The book is very descriptive of the social process and filled with anecdotes that elucidate the more theoretical material. The appendix includes a) current information regarding interpreter and transliterator certifications, b) ethically challenging scenarios, and c) encounters with reality, proving once again that truth is stranger than fiction.

The more experienced interpreter may hunger for more in depth analysis. They should look elsewhere. Those relatively new to the field, or who are involved by virtue of being program administrators, educators, or others who want to know more about the process would do well to begin here.

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