

CEU to PDU?

I am interested in taking a closer look at the present CMP program, because I do feel it is a valuable program. It's commonly known that many students graduating from interpreter training programs are not fully prepared for working in the field of interpreting. They, as well as certified interpreters are still missing some key elements necessary to interpret, so obtaining CEU's are fundamental to improving one's skills. It's vital for interpreters to have the opportunity to improve themselves through purpose-centered education from qualified instructors.

Some interpreters have been getting CEU credits for instruction that doesn't seem to promote insight to themselves, or the process of interpreting. I've seen advertisements for acquiring CEUs by partaking in a tour of a city, or attending a group meditation. Many classes being offered lack any relevancy to the field of interpreting. After having discussions with the Professional Development Committee, I learned that many CEU's are provided after taking on line classes with little if any personal correspondence. The courses are taught in a very passive learning environment with lack of substantial proof as to the interpreters' real participation. I'm thinking it may be better to have limited hours of on line work. Additionally, these classes should involve discussions, modeling, and sharing of each others' work, instead of simply watching slides or videos of Deaf Story tellers. I'm afraid that by accepting CEU's offered in many of these on-line environments we send a message to interpreters that continuing education is not that important. RID is not really holding interpreters accountable, and basically encouraging some to cheat.

In the past CEU's were highly monitored with each credit requiring proof of completion. We are now working under the honor system, which I believe is the appropriate system to use. I believe most of us are being professionally honest, but what about those that are not? The concept of acquiring CEU's is a concept borrowed from other professions who may have already established tangible courses or educational platforms that are pertinent to their field. I feel that our classes lack that credibility by offering such a wide venue. From now on, I propose changing the term of CEU to PDU (professional development units) to emphasis the fact that these credits need to be related to the profession, culture and process of interpreting. I've already sent a letter to the Program administrator about my concerns, to which they have agreed. They have also been trying to figure out a way to make it reasonably measurable and relevant to the profession. It's been difficult to keep in mind the general membership and their individual needs, as well as the mission of RID as a professional

organization charged with encouraging and providing education venues that will enhance our profession. It's a problematic place to be, and I'm wondering how you feel, and where you stand on this issue. Is the CEU program meant to make it easier for the members, and does serving them in this way provide enough impetus to improve and provide measurable growth in our profession? Can we somehow satisfy both needs? As of now, those two things have been at odds, so I'm curious about your thoughts. Maybe there is a better way to identify our continuing education, or maybe you feel the system is working fine, with no need for change. I'd love to have your insight and perspective on the subject. Thank you, and I hope to see your responses soon.