

Seeds to Sow - Introduction

Welcome to Seeds to Sow. This platform has been created as a way community members, in both the Deaf and interpreting communities, can connect regarding issues affecting all of us.

As a certified interpreter with 40+ years of experience I have seen the evolution of the professional field of interpreting. We have made gains, but there are many issues that are still unresolved--the future of our profession is unclear. This evolution has not come without challenges. These challenges are to be embraced, since they are what creates collegial dialogue as we strive to advance our field. Seeds to Sow is designed to be a springboard to stimulate further discussion of current ideas and trends within the signing community. The many issues about which we are passionate must be examined in rational and constructive ways. We hope this will happen with STS.

Over the past several years I have noticed that the primary way in which we communicate about the field of interpreting is via online discussion groups and social media. All of these are rooted in the majority language English. I, too, have contributed to these discussions and have realized that there are nuances and a viewpoint that is lost--that of the Deaf community. Because these messages are not originally presented in ASL, they are heavily skewed to a hearing view, a privileged lens and are not welcoming to Deaf interpreters and the Deaf community at large.

My intention with Seeds to Sow is that all contributions are initially made in an ASL format which is then translated into written English as the secondary source. ASL will be the primary language for discussing issues we face together. All too often bilingual posts are first written in English then translated into ASL. When that is the case, most translations are still rooted and presented with a culturally hearing frame of mind. With these translations from ASL into English we can work together to develop a deeper understanding of what a translation entails. This includes communicating with colleagues regarding the task of translation, text analysis of the ASL source text, and conveying a message released of form. The possibilities of such collaboration are rich and limitless.

My hope is that the contributions made to Seeds to Sow will reflect differing viewpoints which will be celebrated as collegial discussion. These differences in opinion and experience are critical not only to the future of our profession, but will allow us as a community to look further into ourselves, our various

privileges, and perhaps shift our understanding of the work we do as interpreters.

I encourage you to spend time on Seeds to Sow, viewing the variety of posts and contributing to these much-needed conversations. I alone cannot do that, and welcome the diverse fund of knowledge that I trust the subscribership has. We will begin with topics that are central to the Deaf and interpreting communities. For example, we may have conversations that we bring to the RID conference next year in the form of motions or resolutions. If the site is active, subscribers may introduce all kinds of topics in the future.

As a fairly new profession we can look forward collectively into what we want the field of interpreting to look like. We must be proactive, rather than dwelling on the past or reacting to whatever arises in our field. We begin where we are, today. We do that by recognizing where we are, connecting with one another, sharing ideas, and planting seeds to sow for the next tomorrow. I hope you are with me.

Want to contribute to Seeds to Sow? Please see our guidelines below:

1. All posts (original posts and responses) must be submitted in ASL. If the author feels comfortable, she or he may also submit an English translation. If not, STS will work with interpreters on translations. Since the majority of ASL interpreters are not native users of ASL, these translation activities will provide beneficial practice of going from L2 to L1, the recommended direction for translation.
2. All posts should raise ideas that are relevant and currently impacting the Deaf and interpreting communities.
3. Any posts that defame, insult, or praise a particular person will not be accepted for posting.
4. Postings on this site are available for general public viewing. In order to contribute to the dialogue one must become a subscriber to Seeds to Sow. You can do this directly on the home page by clicking the "follow" button and entering your information. Subscriptions are required to eliminate the possibility of spam and inappropriate postings.
5. If you are experiencing difficulties with posting or would like to know more about contributing here please see the informational vlog created by my esteemed colleague and friend Michael Labadie-Mendes, webmaster of Seeds to Sow.