

# CIT News ONLINE

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## Robyn Dean Receives Mary Stotler Award

At the CIT Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Robyn Dean received the Mary Stotler Award for her contributions to the field of interpreting and interpreter education. Ms. Dean is known for her work introducing the Demand Control Schema to her field and assisting interpreters and educators in re-thinking approaches to our profession.

The only award made by CIT is named in honor of Mary Stotler, a founding member and former Board member of

CIT. Mary was an interpreter and interpreter educator in Seattle, WA, greatly revered by the Deaf Community. The award is made jointly with RID.

The following is the nominating letter written by Dr. Robert Pollard.



Robyn Dean

## Justification for Robyn K. Dean to be the Recipient of the 2008 Mary Stotler Award

Robyn Dean is an internationally respected scholar and practitioner in the field of interpreting and interpreter education and, in the view of the nominees, is most deserving of the RID/CIT Mary Stotler Award.

Ms. Dean is most well known as the developer of the Demand-Control Schema (DC-S) that has become rapidly influential in the field of interpreting practice and interpreter education. The pathway she has taken to her present position as an influential educator and researcher is a unique and remarkable one. Ms. Dean graduated from the interpreter training program at Maryville College in Tennessee in 1990, one of the country's few baccalaureate interpreter preparation programs at that time. She subsequently worked as an interpreter at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (1990 – 1992) and as a freelance interpreter in the Rochester, NY area (1992 – 1997, with occasional freelance work continuing to date). In 1993, she joined the staff of the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC), where she worked full-time interpreting for patients in myriad outpatient and inpatient settings at two hospitals. While at URMC, she also began interpreting for the deaf doctoral psychology interns who were being trained at the Deaf Wellness Center in URMC's Department of Psychiatry. Working with deaf professionals while they served hearing psychiatric patients, as well as other professionals and students at URMC, gave Ms. Dean a unique entrée into the world of

doctoral level education in the "practice professions" of psychology and medicine. From these experiences came the early influences that would shape her opinions that interpreting, too, is a practice profession – as opposed to a technical profession – with attending unique dynamics and needs that must be properly addressed by interpreting practitioners and interpreting educators alike.

Her passionate, energetic desire to re-think the nature of interpreting work and, by extension, optimal interpreter education methods, led her to investigate scholarship in the fields of occupational health and practice-professional education methods, particularly learner-centered educational approaches such as problem-based learning. It was her occupational health investigations that led her to the work of Robert Karasek, developer of Demand-Control Theory. Dean found Karasek's theory relevant and applicable to interpreting work. Karasek opined that all jobs have "demands" (factors which workers must respond to in order to be effective) and

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## An Interview with Robyn Dean

In addition to other people's words about the work of Robyn Dean, we wanted to get some of her personal perspective on the work she is involved with and the future of interpreter education.

We are grateful for her making time over the holidays to answer the following questions.



Robyn Dean

### 1) How and why did you enter the field of interpreter education?

Considering that interpreter education has two distinct audiences – pre-service interpreters and working interpreters – I have two separate answers.

I started presenting in 1994 to working interpreters about the ideas which eventually lead to the creation of demand-control schema (DC-S) with only local interpreters. It wasn't until my co-author, Bob Pollard and I started to consider grant funding that we engaged the audience of pre-service interpreters and their teachers/mentors. Our first grant application failed in 2000 but in 2001, our second grant project application to the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education was funded and that was the start of our work with interpreter educators (in collaboration with the University of Tennessee in Knoxville) and indirectly with pre-service interpreters. Subsequent to that grant we have had two other grants from the Department of Education which furthered this work with both pre-service and working interpreters. That's the how.

The answer to the **why** question is more complex. In 1990, I started working as a full time interpreter after graduating with a BA in ASL Interpreting from Maryville College. It wasn't long before I realized that there was a difference between what I was taught during and after the program and what I found myself experiencing as an interpreter. I would talk with colleagues over the occasional coffee or lunch about the complex situations we found ourselves in. We seemed to be experiencing the same things – but it wasn't what we were taught or hearing about in workshops.

It bothered me that there was such a difference between what I was taught and, more importantly, what I was continuing to read and hear about in continuing education venues in light of the reality of my day-to-day work. Even though our experiences and behaviors could sometimes be interpreted as counter to the rhetoric of the field, I knew that I and my colleagues were ethical people. It couldn't remain an infor-

mal conversation between colleagues; ethically, it needed to be had in a more public forum.

So, with some trepidation, I started talking about the differences between the rhetoric of the field and the de facto behaviors of interpreter practitioners. I grounded these ideas in academic scholarship but mostly from outside of the field of interpreting. Other than the influence of my academic research, many of my convictions came from working at a medical center and seeing first-hand how other service professionals were trained and how they thought about and engaged the idea of ethics.

As I began to raise these ideas, audiences of working interpreters seemed grateful and relieved to be having these honest discussions and to find out that they were not alone in their experiences (it wasn't uncommon for people to approach me during breaks with tears in their eyes). It seemed like a logical step to not wait until professionals were out there second guessing themselves, beating themselves up, or talking with criticism about their colleagues' actions or inactions, but instead bring these ideas to interpreter educators and students.

However, I knew and appreciated early on that I wasn't saying anything that wasn't already "*known*" on some level to working interpreters and interpreter educators. The work we did and the ideas we presented and taught were a vehicle for what was *known* to be expressed in new ways, and ways that allowed that *known* to be transferred more effectively.

### 2) The Demand-Control Schema has led to a significant re-thinking of both how interpreters do our work as practitioners and how we teach interpreting. As one of the principal people responsible for the introduction of DC-S, what has been most gratifying or surprising to you about how the field has received this framework for looking at our work?

I appreciate how the question is formulated... "as one of the principal people." It should be noted overtly that while I am the one being interviewed and I was the recipient of the Mary Stotler award, that DC-S (in its creation and success) would still only be something I would talk about with friends over coffee without the diligence, the commitment, and the brilliance of my co-creator, Bob Pollard. I want to acknowledge this partnership. Also, Bob and I built DC-S on the foundation of Robert Karasek's Demand Control Theory. Now, back to me (smile).

*Dean Interview, continued on page 21*

BY XENIA FRETTER WOODS, M.A., CI, CT, SC:L, EIPA 5

## Applications of Demand Control Schema in Interpreter Education

*Proceedings of the RID Pre-Conference Meeting  
August 3, 2007, San Francisco, CA*

This document consists of seven papers related to the evolution of how interpreter educators use the Demand-Control Schema. The papers were presented at the 2007 Pre-RID-conference meeting arranged specially for discussion of this topic. The presenters were Stacey Storme from Johnson County Community College (Kansas), Paula Gajewski-Mickelson from the College of St. Catherine (Minnesota), Linda Ross from Hallenross and Associates (Ohio), Anna Witter-Merithew from the DO IT Center (Colorado), and Eileen Forestal & Cindy Williams from Union County College (New Jersey).

In the introduction, Robyn Dean and Robert Pollard explain their reasons for arranging the pre-conference meeting:

*Our first goal was to provide an update for the interpreting profession on how the work has developed since our first DC-S publication appeared in 2001, especially because, at that time, the work was focused more on occupational health issues than it is today.*

*Our second goal was to provide teachers in interpreter preparation programs (IPPs) the opportunity to showcase their applications and opinions regarding DC-S based on their experiences employing the schema in the classroom. This goal was particularly important because, even though we developed the schema, we are not employed by an IPP and therefore must rely on our*

*colleagues' experience and expertise to help answer the questions, "Where does DC-S fit in interpreter education curricula and how useful is it?"*



The Proceedings sell for \$25 which includes shipping costs. To order this resource, you can contact:

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(Checks payable to  
University of Rochester.)

[For more details, click here.](#)

The resulting papers provide a variety of perspectives on how the D-C schema has been used in interpreter education over the last several years. They provide interpreter educators (including mentors) valuable glimpses into how others have been making use of this understandably popular approach to situational analysis and problem solving. Accompanying the papers are several case studies which give concrete, on-the-ground examples of application of the schema in mentor-practitioner relationships in a variety of environments.

Dean and Pollard emphasize in their introduction to the papers that they desire to move the focus away from the interpreter's experience of stress and toward the usefulness of the Demand Control Schema

in increasing work effectiveness. This paradigm aligns with their assertion that interpreting is a practice profession – that is: it requires much more than just technical skill for an interpreter to be effective. They end with a promise to produce a Demand Control Schema textbook, which will most likely be available in 2010. 🙌

## Stotler Award *continued from page 1*

all workers bring “controls” (personal characteristics and resources such as education, experience, judgment, decision-making authority, etc.) to their specific job situations. He demonstrated, using cardiovascular health data, that when demands and controls were well-balanced, work was effective and workers were healthy and satisfied. When there was a mis-match between demands and controls, work was ineffective and workers were stressed, unhealthy, and unhappy. Dean took the basics of Demand Control Theory and extended these concepts toward unique application to the interpreting field. Her Demand Control Schema thus began to evolve and, in 1995, she gave her first presentation to an interpreter audience on the application of demand-control concepts to the field of interpreting practice.

For the next six years, Dean continued to refine and expand her ideas about the application of Karasek’s theory to the interpreting profession, benefiting from the encouragement and constructive feedback she received from an increasing number of interpreter audiences she was presenting to (including a presentation at the CIT conference in 2000.) Simultaneously, she was taking courses at URM (while working full-time) on topics pertaining to professional education approaches, research, and grant-writing. She also began preparing manuscripts and grants regarding her evolving Demand Control Schema (DC-S). In recognition of these scholarly pursuits and her educational contributions to students and faculty at URM (where she frequently consulted and lectured on interpreting topics), in 1999 she was appointed to the faculty of URM’s School of Medicine. Never before had an interpreter been recognized with the honor of a medical school faculty appointment. (The appointment was one of title and rank; her full-time job remained that of an interpreter on the hospital staff, which is notable in that all of her scholarly pursuits were done “on her own time.”) She also found the time and energy to obtain a master’s degree in Theology, graduating in 2006 from the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. A significant part of her interest in Theology is related to the influence that translation and translators have in that field.

In 2001, Dean published her first peer-reviewed paper on the subject of DC-S in the *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, co-authored by her collaborator, Robert Pollard, psychologist and director of the Deaf Wellness Center. This article laid forth the basic foundations of her schema, its implications for re-framing the factors relevant to interpreter stress and occupational health problems (such as repetitive motion injury) and also addressed her views of inadequacies in interpreter education methods, linked directly to her

thoughts on the nature of interpreting as a “practice profession.” This still-popular article brought Ms. Dean’s DC-S ideas to a wider audience of scholars and teachers in the interpreting field, the vast majority of whom did not know Robyn because she was not affiliated with an interpreter preparation program. In the same year this seminal publication appeared, Dean and Pollard received a three-year federal Department of Education grant to employ DC-S teaching methodologies with students in an interpreter preparation program. Up to that time, virtually all of Dean’s DC-S teaching was with practicing interpreters. It was feedback from such audiences – that they “wished they’d have learned this information when still in school” – that led to the question of whether DC-S could be as helpful to interpreting students as it seemed to be to practicing interpreters. The baccalaureate interpreter preparation program at the University of Tennessee joined the project, collaborating with Dean to “infuse” numerous courses in their curriculum with DC-S instructional elements. So successful was this endeavor, that the director of the Institute for Assessment and Evaluation, hired to provide an expert, objective evaluation of the project, wrote “Frankly, of all the projects I have evaluated over the years, none have ever come close to achieving these results.” The success of this project led to a number of additional publications and broader recognition of the DC-S approach and, importantly, Dean’s scholarly manner of investigating and documenting its potential value.

A second, three-year, Department of Education grant was awarded to Dean and Pollard in 2006. This time, to disseminate the successful methods and materials developed through the University of Tennessee project to interpreter preparation programs (IPPs) around the US. The original grant called for including 12 IPPs in the new project but so many wanted to be involved that the project was “stretched” to include 15. Spread around the country, these 15 programs are currently employing DC-S materials and methods in a variety of ways. The evaluation of this project is structured in a unique manner, in which the “dosage” of DC-S infusion in each program is quantified and the results will be examined in a way that will determine whether there is a “dose-response” pattern to student outcomes as a function of the degree of their exposure to DC-S learning methods in their programs. This project, slated to terminate in late 2009 will, among other results, yield a formal Demand Control Schema textbook, which will include numerous DC-S materials for teachers to employ in the classroom. Now mid-way through this project, the outside evaluation team, consisting of experts in interpreter education and educational program evaluation, report very favorable findings.


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## Stotler Award *continued from page 14*

In between these IPP-focused research and teaching projects, Dean's DC-S methods were the subject of another federal grant secured by the Deaf Wellness Center. This one addresses the learning needs of practicing interpreters who work in mental health service settings and employs Dean's observation-supervision approach to interpreter education. Observation-supervision is one of many expansions of DC-S methodology that has evolved since the time of Dean's initial 2001 publication. Briefly, the method involves sending interpreters into settings to observe work-relevant conversations (e.g., mental health conversations) between hearing professionals and hearing consumers. The absence of deaf consumers and working interpreters in the observation settings allows the observers to learn critical elements of "typical" dialogue and dynamics (e.g., the goals of the professionals) undistracted by watching an interpreter make translation decisions and unconstrained by how a specific deaf consumer colors that particular situation. Observers use structured observation forms, based on DC-S, to record various potential interpreting work elements of the situation and then bring these forms to "supervision" sessions where a class leader draws out key DC-S issues and overlays matters of interpreting work, Deaf culture, etc., upon the foundation matters the observers have learned. Again, the beneficial impact of this approach is being borne out in the research findings in this study.

Dean's scholarship and teaching expands beyond these grant-supported initiatives. She is currently engaged in sev-

eral research studies – including one on occupational stress across various interpreter work settings (including VRS), one on translation approaches for health surveillance surveys, and several being conducted by the National Center for Deaf Health Research, for whom she works on a part-time basis. Ms. Dean has tutored interpreter interns at URM and co-wrote a federal grant proposing a year-long interpreting internship there. Her lecture and workshop schedule is amazingly busy. She travels two to three times monthly, throughout the US and in Europe, teaching DC-S and related workshops (e.g., DC-S applications in mental health or interpreting) to audiences that include not only sign language interpreters (sometimes from foreign countries) but, increasingly, spoken language interpreter audiences as well. (And mixed audiences of interpreters and other practice professionals, too.) She has published nine articles on DC-S, a number sure to grow rapidly in the next few years.

Robyn K. Dean is a vibrant and unique talent in the interpreting field. A mere decade ago, she was a full-time practicing interpreter, but one with a sharp and hungry intellect who had faith that interpreting work and interpreting education could be improved and unique ideas about how that might be accomplished. She embarked upon a scholarly approach to that effort, based upon the fundamental recognition that interpreting is a practice profession. Her work has had a rapid and remarkable impact on the field. It has benefited students, IPP teachers, researchers, and thousands of practicing interpreters (signed and spoken language alike) around the globe. Robyn Dean's influential DC-S scholarship and teaching merit the recognition of the Stotler Award. 

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## Thrive in Higher Ed, *continued from page 3*

Expectations across academic institutions is helpful, it does not assist a new faculty member acclimate into their specific academic environment. To gain this needed information faculty members must investigate their institutions. First, new faculty members should read the faculty handbook for their college/university. Careful reading of the faculty handbook provides a glimpse into the major focus area of your institution. Additionally, you should seek out mentors from your own department and other departments who have been at the institution for several years. Long-time faculty members who have served on reappointment and tenure and promotion committees may have the most insight into the specific expectations for teaching, service, and scholarship at your institution. Further, meeting people from outside of your immediate department is critical to gaining a holistic view of your institution. Boice (2000) suggests eating lunch in the faculty dining room (or some other place on campus where faculty members congregate) and introducing yourself to

other faculty members. Serving on college or university level committees that include representatives from several departments also serves to build relationships beyond your academic unit.

For faculty members and department chairs who work with new faculty members, there are some things you can do to help your faculty acclimate to their positions. First, be a resource for new faculty members – those in your own department as well as in others. Help new faculty members make connections with other faculty members on campus. Provide your personal insights into the climate and culture of your institution. Minorities may feel even more isolation and discrimination so the development of relationships and peer support is even more crucial (Piercy, et al, 2005; Murray, 2007; Thompson, 2008; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006).

After learning more about academia in general and our spe-

*Thrive in Higher Ed, continued on page 16*

## Dean Interview, continued from page 7

The most gratifying aspect is to see others – working interpreters, mentors, educators, even students – take DC-S (after a good amount of training) and apply it successfully in ways or in topic areas that I couldn't, simply because I don't have the same experience or expertise that they do; for example using DC-S with Deaf interpreters which some of my colleagues have begun exploring. There are plenty more opportunities for applications of DC-S for interpreter education that I continually encourage and support others to consider, execute, research, and write about.

The surprise was or is how fast the work became popular – not only with ASL interpreters but in other countries' interpreting communities and with spoken language interpreters as well. People were asking me for things (materials, applications, training, etc.) that I just couldn't provide or produce fast enough. I was glad for the field's reception of the work but I worried – and still do – about maintaining the quality of the work, especially when other people "take off" with the work, which is a good thing but only when their training in DC-S is sufficient. I wanted DC-S to be out there but I wanted the work to be good quality, too. That was and remains a balancing act.

### **3) Given all of the research, projects, and presentations you are part of, what provides you with the energy to keep up your level of work?**

This will sound corny but the energy comes from the audiences I present to. I teach a DC-S workshop (or some derivative of) as often as two times per month and there are times (usually en route to the venue or in the hotel room) where I am convinced that I can't say the same stuff again. But once I start talking and once I start to see interpreters get excited and energized – when it's apparent that we are going to talk frankly about the work – it never fails that I, too, get energized.

I like interpreters. We are good people. I like meeting interpreters, seeing their excitement, hearing their stories, and joining in their angst about the complexities of the work. I am very fortunate.

However, before the workshop begins, behind the scenes beforehand, it's just me in front of my computer trying to put it all together. Energy for that is harder to find. I get energy from the collaboration with the audiences and my colleagues in interpreter education – not from computer time.

### **4) What do you see as coming trends in interpreter education?**

What I currently see, which is disturbing and runs counter to what we have tried to do in this field, is the trend towards producing interpreters quickly. It devalues education and the time necessary for producing quality professionals. That pressure to produce interpreters quickly is very present and the message it sends – interpreting is a technical profession – is in direct contrast to our belief that interpreting is a practice profession and therefore, we should be educated and treated as one.

### **5) If you had a magic wand and could change only one thing about ASL interpreter education today, what would it be?**

The first grant that we tried for in 2000 was a grant to design and trial an interpreter internship – 40 hours a week of practice experience for a full year. It was complete with hands-on work/duties and rotations – just like many other practice professions have at the end of their formal education. It would also require that interpreters engage in case conferencing with their peers and their supervisors so their work could be critiqued – not only their translations but their judgment and their interpersonal skills. We didn't get that grant, so I wish I did have a magic wand. I still think it is a good idea and would like to see it happen. Whether an interpreter preparation program was 2 years or 4 years, I would require a completion of a year-long, supervised internship before a professional could sit for a certification test. I hope, even in light of the trend toward producing interpreters quickly mentioned above, that we still get to that level of appreciation for the work, appreciation for the professional, and appreciation for our consumers.