Improving Psychological Skill in Trainee Interpreters

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Abstract

The general effects of self-efficacy and explanatory style on performance have been thoroughly researched in the field of psychology. This article is based on Atkinson's (2012) *psychological skill* model, which attempts to construct these factors to complement traditional conceptions of interpreter and translator skill, and apply them to interpreter and translator training. This article is a discussion of psychological skill, including factors of self-efficacy, explanatory style, and locus of control, and outlines how self-efficacy and explanatory style can become a focus of interpreter training. Resources to help students conduct self-analysis on their occupational self-efficacy and explanatory style are provided in the appendices, in the form of scales educators can use in their classes. A range of ideas are highlighted to assist students in becoming aware of their psychological skill, and pedagogical suggestions are offered for changing and improving aspects of psychological skill in students.

Keywords

Psychological skill, interpreters, self-efficacy, explanatory style, teaching

Improving Psychological Skill in Trainee Interpreters

Previous research has shown the importance of psychological skill to the performance and success outcomes of freelance translators, including factors of occupational self-efficacy, explanatory style, and locus of control (Atkinson, 2012).

In this article, we will discuss the notion of psychological skill as it applies to freelance interpreters, and will provide some materials and ideas that can be used in education settings to support student interpreters and ease the entry-to-practice transition. The article includes three self-assessment questionnaires that interpreter educators can give to their students to use for diagnostic purposes in terms of evaluating their psychological skill. Additionally, we include some suggested activities that can be used in the classroom to help interpreters to improve aspects of their psychological skill.

1. Introduction

The interpreting industry in Australasia is primarily comprised of freelance interpreters. Freelance work requires relatively high levels of particular skills—self-motivation, self-confidence, and self-promotion. Focusing on the three main interpreter-training programs available in Auckland, New Zealand, there is currently no particular emphasis on training students in the area of psychological skill to help them to prepare for the special challenges of freelance work mentioned above.[1] Programs result in diplomas, certificates, or degrees in interpreting, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. These programs include a mix of interpreting theory, ethics, contextual studies (i.e. terminology and features of particular areas of industry, such as law, medicine, and business), and interpreting practice (AUT University, 2012; Unitec, 2012; University of Auckland, 2012).

Upon successful completion of their program, students are expected to graduate with the traditional skill sets required to interpret competently within their areas of focus. In addition, graduates are expected

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[1] AUT University's interpreting programme teaches one session on assertiveness, in the context of building resilience in responding to criticism. This partly relates to explanatory style, and the tendencies concerning how people respond to such criticism.

to be reflective practitioners upon graduation as they move forward in their careers, with regard not only to their interpreting skills, but also their psychological skills. In other words, they are expected to develop into both competent and confident professionals who are not only capable of performing the tasks assigned or offered to them, but are also reasonably confident in their ability to do so. Self-reflection provides an opportunity to identify any weaknesses and gives them the opportunity to focus on areas to improve on an ongoing basis. This kind of reflection post-graduation can be encouraged by devoting time within an interpreting program to self-assessment and to the enhancement of psychological skills. This approach may particularly benefit those practitioners who end up working as freelancers, given the potentially isolating nature of this type of employment.

1.1 The concept of psychological skill

Psychological skill is defined herein as the effects of self-efficacy, explanatory style, and locus of control on interpreters' work. In this article, we center on self-efficacy and explanatory style, due in part to restrictions on the use of Spector's (1988) work locus of control scale, which we applied in previous research (Atkinson, 2012). This study originally arose out of a perceived lack of research and teaching focus on the attitudinal/personality/self-evaluative side of translation and interpreting practice.

In interpreter and translator training, the tradition has been to focus almost exclusively on technical and linguistic skill advancement, leaving psychological skills largely untouched, or addressing them implicitly rather than explicitly. Based on previous research on translators, which showed statistically significant correlations between measures of success in translators, and positive aspects of psychological skill (namely good levels of self-efficacy and a positive explanatory style; Atkinson, 2012), it would appear important to develop those skills in students who are starting out professionally.

It cannot be said that those who start out with low psychological skill will necessarily fail in their profession (unless they have extremely low levels of psychological skill, to the extent that they may become paralyzed through depression or lack of confidence), but rather that development in this area will help those about to graduate. Based on related research and findings drawn from the field of psychology (Atkinson, 2012, p. 146; Shea & Howell, 2000), components of psychological skill can grow organically throughout the duration of one's interpreting career, assuming no strongly negative events of the type that could make a person want to quit their career. However, the initial development stage upon entry-to-practice can be tough for novice practitioners, and an 'inoculation' of good psychological skill, particularly of occupational self-efficacy, can make this early period easier to go through, and may mitigate attrition from the field by ill-prepared practitioners.

It has been our observation among students that we have taught that people with good levels of psychological skill have some difficulty understanding the relevance of it to themselves, or even to others. Those who are more introverted, or who tend towards self-blame or negative thinking under stress, find such discussion more relevant to them, as they understand the impact that such thinking can have on the

tasks or studies that they attempt (Bartlomiejczyk, 2007). Such effects may result in procrastination, or not attempting the task at all, or may be related to excessive anxiety (Chiang, 2009).

An important assumption in this article (supported by research) is that good levels of occupational self-efficacy (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) and a good explanatory style (Laird & Metalsky, 2008; Weiner, 1986, 2006) are desirable skills to possess. By 'good', we mean that occupational self-efficacy is at a level at which a person feels confident enough to take on a task which is a little bit more challenging than they are used to. This encourages people to stretch and develop themselves, rather than stay in their comfort zone. Having occupational self-efficacy at an optimal level also means that people will not attempt things which are technically too difficult for them—in other words, where there is a high probability of failure. In interpreting and translation, this is particularly important, as the quality outcomes can be critical. Secondly, by 'good explanatory style', we mean that a person's explanatory style is normally a positive one. This means taking a reasonable amount of personal credit for successful outcomes, which in turn boosts self-efficacy and encourages further efforts. It also means avoiding a negative explanatory style, in which people tend to consistently blame themselves for failure and/or attribute success to luck. Such a negative style has been associated with helplessness, negative affect, quitting, and even depression (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Robins & Hayes, 1995). This is generally a negative state of affairs for interpreters and translators, particularly as working as a freelance interpreter or translator can be quite isolating, which may augment such problems.

1.2 Summary of findings in relevant previous research

Previous research has focused on the relationship between psychological skill and professional success. Using various measurement scales, the primary author (2012) found—among an international sample of 92 professional interpreters and translators with a minimum of six months' of experience—that work-related self-efficacy was statistically significantly related to measures of success such as income, hours worked per week, quantity of jobs per week, number of years in the industry, and job satisfaction. This research was conducted using quantitative correlational methods to measure 21 work-related and psychological variables, and was further investigated using ordinal regression models which showed the contribution of occupational self-efficacy, in particular, to being able to predict key measures of professional success among the sample.

Using these regression models, occupational self-efficacy (as a key component of psychological skill) was a strong predictor of income, allowing numerical prediction—from a set of both psychological skill and work-related variables—of participants' income bracket, level of job satisfaction, and the amount of work desired (Atkinson, 2012, pp. 169, 175, 177). Correlational analysis also showed that occupational self-efficacy, locus of control, and explanatory style were statistically significantly related to measures of professional success, such as income, quantity of work, and job satisfaction. Participant interview data

analysis supported the hypothesis that psychological skill contributes to success, but that it is also improved as a result of success. Having higher levels of psychological skill was mentioned by participants in interviews as being a factor that helped them to advance themselves by being confident enough to accept new challenges, the successful completion of which in turn led them to further develop their confidence (Atkinson, 2012). Some of the challenges faced by participants involved dealing with client feedback, challenging client misunderstanding around the nature and financial value of language work, and promotion and networking of their own business.

Traditional approaches to the training and education of translators and interpreters have tended to focus upon core competences: research, transfer, writing, decision-making skills for translators (Fraser, 2000; Göpferich, Bayer-Hohenwarter, Prassl, & Stadlober, 2011; PACTE, 2011), and cognitive, memory, and psycholinguistic issues for interpreters (Kurz, 2003; Liu, 2008). In Translation Studies, psychological and personality issues have tended to be ignored or regarded as insignificant (apart from isolated studies, such as Hubscher-Davidson, 2009). Thus, one of the gaps that we see in interpreter and translator education and training is that of explicitly attempting to build student confidence and creating awareness among students of how their psychological skills and self-evaluations can affect their actions and choices.

One exception to the relative lack of research on psychological factors in the field of interpreting (aside from cognitive, memory-related, and psycholinguistic issues to do with performance—i.e. *process research*) is the work of Bontempo and Napier (2009, 2011, 2012), who explored interpreter performance and pedagogical issues in terms of interpreter personality characteristics. Bontempo has also raised concern regarding the possible link between interpreter personality and vulnerability to vicarious traumatization at work (Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012).

One of the questions asked by Bontempo and Napier (2009, 2011) is whether personality assessment can form a useful part of interpreter selection for training programs. Personality, understood here as a constellation of behavior characteristics with long-term stability, is perhaps most famously modeled using the "Big-5" construct (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990). Personality in general has some solid relationships with work performance—particularly neuroticism, which is correlated with negative occupational performance, and conscientiousness, which is correlated with positive occupational performance (Neal, Yeo, Koy, & Xiao, 2012). The perfectionism construct, related to general personality but actually part of motivation theory, has also been a relatively good predictor of positive performance (Rice & Slaney, 2002), although excessive perfectionism can also have negative effects. Self-esteem, while potentially more transient and changeable than core personality, and more related to what are sometimes labeled "core self-evaluations", is also related to performance (Judge & Bono, 2001b; Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott, & Rich, 2007).

The same general patterns have been observed by Bontempo and Napier (2012) in relation to interpreter performance, with the major predictors of sign-language interpreter performance of a US sample of interpreters being self-esteem and openness to experience (a component of the Big-5

personality model). They conducted the same study with an Australian sample and found the major predictors of interpreter performance were self-esteem and conscientiousness (again, a component of the Big-5 model). These findings tie in with concern for aptitude testing in people applying for interpreter training programs, so as to select the best candidates and reduce the failure rate (Russo & Salvador, 2004).

However, what we focus on in this article is what can be done *after* students have been accepted to an interpreting program, irrespective of any pre-program selection procedures. By its very definition, personality is difficult to change; psychological skill less so.

2. Methodology

The basic method proposed here is self-assessment. In this case, self-assessment can be undertaken by using the scales provided in Appendices 1a, 1b, and 1c of this article, using a self-report methodology, which was used in Atkinson (2012). This is relatively simple: students read the scales and follow the instructions, summing their total scores at the end, and get to see how they have done. A range of scores indicating students' placing (strictly for their own self-evaluation) is also provided for each scale. The scales are validated, have been used in prior research, and have undergone quality control measures (see Section 3.1 below).

The self-assessment procedure might run as follows. Firstly, the students complete the scales and add up their scores, as per the instructions given with the scales in the appendices. This gives them an idea of where they stand with the psychological skill components. Secondly, the interpreter educator can then explain the general range of scores and what they mean regarding psychological skill. It is vital students complete the scales first, before explanation, as this will help to reduce effects such as social desirability bias (Nederhof, 2006).

The next major question regarding self-assessment is dealing with the results. We recommend that students have the opportunity, after having completed the self-assessment, to talk to the interpreter educator if any concerns arise. This is particularly important for those who may feel significant self-doubt about themselves after looking at their scores. The educator can provide information, after using the scales, noting what scale indications might be problematic, based on the information given here in the appendices. The debriefing is a standard technique for social science research, in case that research brings up some problem or anxiety on the part of the participant (Sieber, 2004). The same basic principle applies here, except that in this case we are also interested in teaching and improving on the basis of such feedback, rather than in simply reducing potential harm.

After the students have completed the scales and had time to think about their responses, there should an opportunity for the scores to be discussed in a general manner in the classroom. For example, the ranges and general significance of each part of the range can be discussed with students. It is

recommended that this be done in as encouraging and supportive a manner as possible, so that students do not come away with the impression that they are 'stuck' where they are. On the other hand, it may be that those with extreme scores could benefit from assistance and perhaps career counseling (offered discreetly), so they can verify for themselves whether they are suitable for interpreting, in terms of the "person-job fit" model (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

3. Materials

3.1 Self-evaluation scales

All three scales have been tested psychometrically by their original authors and have been used subsequently by other researchers. They have had their internal reliability (Chronbach's alpha) tested by the main author; the alpha values were adequate for the explanatory style scales and very good for the occupational self-efficacy scale (Atkinson, 2012, p. 140).

3.1.1 Occupational self-efficacy scale

The self-efficacy scale was originally designed as a work-related self-efficacy scale by Schyns and von Collani (2002). It was designed to measure the degree of self-efficacy that users had, and focused on their occupational self-efficacy, rather than general self-efficacy.

In essence, the scale measures how confident people feel towards their particular job—how capable they feel about using the skills they have to solve problems and to create successful outcomes. Self-efficacy is not the same as self-esteem, as it does not include a component of self-worth as a person (Judge & Bono, 2001a, p. 96).

3.1.2 Two explanatory style scales

The explanatory style scales were originally designed as a single general-use scale for looking at locus of responsibility for negative and positive events (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984). This entails users making judgments on whether they see positive events and negative events as being caused by themselves, or caused by external forces, such as situational factors or other people's actions.

The original scale involved two sections—responsibility for positive outcomes (RPO), and responsibility for negative outcomes (RNO). Factor analysis showed that there were at least two factors in the scale (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984, p. 44), and our research showed that this separation was justified (Atkinson, 2012). The RPO section of the scale is divided into two sections, with three questions asking about whether respondents consider that positive outcomes are due to luck, other people, or other *external* forces, and three questions asking whether respondents consider that positive outcomes are due to *internal* causes, such as effort and skill. The RNO scale, on the other hand, has six questions asking respondents

about their perceptions of responsibility for negative events that happen to them. Most people will end up being higher on one scale than on the other, as these nominally measure opposing ends of the same construct.

4. Discussion and recommendations

In this section, we will outline some teaching suggestions that will assist students in increasing their metacognitive awareness of how their psychological skill affects them, helping them understand the mechanics of how the components work.

There are a number of options for teaching students about psychological skill. Three of these that we have focused on are explanation, modeling, and role-play, which range from the theoretical to the practical (Appendix 2 shows a couple of examples that might be used). The descriptions here of these are necessarily brief.[2]

4.1 Explanation

Explanation is about describing to students how the components of psychological skill work within us—in other words, the theoretical mechanics of the components. The method of delivery is fundamentally a lecture about the basic details of self-efficacy and explanatory style in a user-friendly manner (lecture with examples, backed up with PowerPoint or similar media). Explanation of the components is an essential first step in developing student understanding. Many people are not consciously aware of the effects of particular types of self-evaluation on their subsequent behavior. Explanation can be supported with a video clip or other visual presentation, which can serve to emphasize the key points of the explanation. This also provides a good link into the modeling method of teaching.

In terms of teaching, around half an hour or so to explain the basics of psychological skill should be sufficient. Explanation accompanied by plenty of real-life examples can be useful in helping students to understand how these principles operate. Examples can be particularly helpful for those students who come from cultures in which western-style psychology has yet to have a large influence in the public consciousness and/or is not part of the educational milieu. In our teaching practice in Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies, we have observed some students in this category who have benefited from examples to clarify their thinking about the components of psychological skill and how these might work for them.

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[2] The primary author is currently working on another article that outlines these methods in more detail.

4.2 Modeling

Modeling is the opportunity to learn from others by observing their behavior and then modeling that behavior. It takes education a step further from explanation, and builds upon it. Modeling is a fundamental component of learning, particularly of procedures and of behaviors (Bandura, 1971; Dowrick, 2012) and is described in Bandura's theory of observational learning (Fryling, Johnston, & Hayes, 2011). In the types of situations that we are interested in, modeling can be achieved in the learning setting by watching movies or by observing behavior between various actors. It can also be a by-product of role-play in the classroom setting, thus linking it to the third teaching component.

In terms of teaching, there are a number of possibilities. For example, the lecturer can model the behavior themselves, such as demonstrating the difference between different explanatory styles regarding the same event. They can take an event, such as a criticism of interpreting performance, and show a number of ways in which such an event could be explained. They can show an excessively negative explanation, in which the interpreter blames themselves in a negative and unconstructive manner, versus an excessively positive explanation, in which the interpreter blames others or the situation for their performance. The lecturer could then present what might be a 'balanced' situation, in which elements of both personal responsibility and external causes are integrated and turned into something that the interpreter can deal with, without going to the extremes of punishing themselves or refusing to take responsibility.

Modeling can also be demonstrated by watching footage of professionals' responses to challenging work situations, or by observing professionals discuss their experiences. Film clips can be custom-made for the interpreting classroom, such as presenting a range of different situations, in which the principal actor performs a think-aloud type protocol, explaining their thoughts and decisions as they happen. Professionals can also explain to the class how their self-efficacy and explanatory style have been put to use in a number of specific situations. Using a professional interpreter as a guest speaker would require that they be briefed beforehand, to ensure that they understand what psychological skill is, and so that they can communicate relevant information to the students.

4.3 Role-play

Role-play is potentially a good method for learning, practicing, and honing particular behavioral responses or patterns of action. It also presents others with good opportunities for modeling. Role play can be done using many different methods and is often very effective (Johansson, Skeff, & Stratos, 2012; Lane, Hood, & Rollnick, 2008). In the classroom, interpreter educators can role-play different characters at once (in other words, playing the part of two or more individuals in a conversation), or they can involve particular students who feel confident enough to take part in the role-play and take on a role with the educator or with other classmates. Students who are high in confidence may benefit less directly from

such training, as they typically already have good psychological skill if able to participate effectively in a role play like this. Nonetheless, their contribution offers an excellent peer modeling opportunity for other students in the class.

Another possibility is to use teaching colleagues, or even professional interpreters to create the other parts in the role-play. One of the advantages of using professional interpreters is that they are already familiar with the kinds of situations which the role-play might involve.

One example of this in action is in a scenario whereby the interpreter educator models the responses of high and low self-efficacy, with a student reading a script concerning client criticism of an interpreter's performance. This method allows the teacher to show how role-play can be undertaken, and also provides a model for the students. This can also give students the confidence to try such activity for themselves, perhaps in pairs or triads.

4.4 Conclusions

In summary, this article presents interpreter educators with some ideas on how they might assess and influence the psychological skill of their students, which will complement the current emphasis on technical and linguistic skills in interpreter education programs. It is hoped that this will also provide inspiration for further research in this area, to observe and measure how effective these teaching methods may be.

Based on the research discussed in the introduction, it would seem to be a good idea to allow at least one formal teaching session within interpreter education and training programs for the development of psychological skill. This discussion can also be combined with consideration of burnout, stress, and trauma concerns for interpreters, and sharing strategies to mitigate these (Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012; Crezee, Hayward, & Jülich, 2011)—in other words, broad psychological issues affecting interpreters. The research drawn from the broader field of psychology is clear that self-efficacy and explanatory style can be influenced by intervention (Hyde, Hankins, Deale, & Marteau, 2008; Proudfoot, Corr, Guest, & Dunn, 2009; Sofronoff & Farbotko, 2002). Based on this, it is worthwhile to consider intervention and increasing awareness of psychological skill as a part of basic interpreter education to improve interpreter resilience and enhance professional practice.

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Appendix 1a: Occupational self-efficacy scale (Schyns & von Collani, 2002)

The following questions ask you about your general beliefs about work and about your work as an interpreter. Think of a range of situations, both past and future, and answer the following questions based on how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Even if you feel that the question may not apply to you, try to draw upon your experience to answer.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1) Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) If I am in trouble in my work, I can usually think of something to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) When I am confronted with a problem in my job, I can usually find several solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5) No matter what comes my way in my job, I'm usually able to handle it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6) My past experiences in my job have prepared my well for my occupational future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7) I meet the goals that I set for myself in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8) I feel prepared to meet most of the demands in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Scoring

After students have completed the scale, they can sum their scores. Scores on this scale range from 8 (very low occupational self-efficacy) to 48 (very high occupational self-efficacy).

Score ranges

The range of scores can be a useful guide to students. In terms of the ranges presented, 8-16 would be *very low* occupational self-efficacy, 17-24 would be *low*, 25-32 *moderate*, 33-40 *high*, and 41-48 *very high*.

Appendix 1b: Explanatory style scale—Responsibility for Positive Outcomes (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984)

Please answer the following questions concerning your attitudes towards positive events in general life and in your work as an interpreter.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1) It will largely be a matter of luck if I succeed in life.	1	2	3	4	5
2) If I get what I want in life it will only be through hard work.	1	2	3	4	5
3) In my case getting what I want has had little or nothing to do with luck.	1	2	3	4	5
4) I have found that success in anything is built on hard work.	1	2	3	4	5
5) Most of my successes have happened without my really trying.	1	2	3	4	5
6) Success seems to me to have been largely a matter of having been in the right place at the right time.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

After students have completed the scale, they can sum their scores. The sum of scores of items 2, 3, and 4 indicate the tendency towards believing in personal responsibility for successful outcomes. The sum of scores on items 1, 5, and 6 indicate the tendency towards believing in the responsibility of external forces or other people for successful outcomes.

Score ranges

The range of scores can be a useful guide to students. The sum of scores for items 2, 3, and 4 range from 3 to 15. A score of 3 would indicate a very low degree of belief in personal responsibility for success, while a score of 15 would indicate a very high degree of the same.

Concerning items 1, 5, and 6, a score of 3 would indicate a very high level of belief in personal responsibility for success, while a score of 15 would indicate a very low belief in the same.

Table 1: Responsibility for Positive Outcomes scale scores

	Low responsibility	Moderate responsibility	High responsibility
Items 2, 3, and 4	3-7	8-11	12-15
Items 1, 5, and 6	12-15	8-11	3-7

Appendix 1c: Explanatory style scale—Responsibility for Negative Outcomes (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984)

Please answer the following questions concerning your attitudes towards negative events in general life and in your work as an interpreter.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1) I usually blame myself when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
2) For most of my misfortunes and disappointments I have nobody to blame but myself.	1	2	3	4	5
3) When I have been criticized it has usually been deserved.	1	2	3	4	5
4) My misfortunes have resulted mainly from the mistakes I've made.	1	2	3	4	5
5) When relationships with others have gone wrong I have usually felt that I was to blame.	1	2	3	4	5
6) When people have not liked me I have usually felt there was something wrong with me.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

After students have completed the scale, they can sum their scores. The sum of scores ranges from 6 (largely blame themselves for negative events) to 36 (largely blame others or outside influences for negative events), and is indicative of the degree to which people blame themselves when things go wrong for them.

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Score ranges

The range of scores can be a useful guide to students. The ranges of scores for all items are presented below.

Table 2: Responsibility for Negative Outcomes scale scores

	Low responsibility	Moderate responsibility	High responsibility
All items	6-16	17-26	27-36

Appendix 2: Sample scenarios

This appendix presents a few sample scenarios that could be incorporated when teaching and discussing psychological skill in the classroom.

Firstly, there should be a back-story of some kind, presented to the students. The students should then be given a few minutes to consider the issue themselves. The teacher can then ask the students to discuss their feelings and ideas about the situation, perhaps first with a partner, then sharing contributions with the class, for those who wish to (this latter part may tend to attract the more confident students). How they respond and how they feel may be indicative of level of psychological skill. The reaction will be entirely personal to each student who considers the scenario, and the aim of the methodology is to develop self-reflection and promote in-class discussion.

Here is an example of a scenario: *You are presented with the possibility of accepting an interpreting job that is within your abilities, but one which you consider will challenge you significantly. Would you accept it or not, and what would be your reasoning process for making your decision?* Those with higher levels of self-efficacy will probably be happy to accept such a job, while those with lower levels may not want to stretch themselves (so much) beyond their comfort zone. In this situation, a person's 'risk appetite' (perhaps better expressed as 'appetite for challenge'), which is at least partly influenced by their self-efficacy, can influence how much a person is predisposed to try new activities.

Here is another possible scenario: *You receive some negative feedback from a client concerning the quality of your interpreting. They allege that some mistakes were made which led to a contract being cancelled. Thinking about it carefully, you are fairly sure that the quality of your interpreting was of a high standard. How would you apportion responsibility for this event? Do you think that your interpreting influenced the outcome, or is it more likely to be some other factor?* A question such as this should tap into the students' explanatory style tendencies, and get them to start thinking about how they explain the causes of events. How they respond to a situation like this should also be reflected in the way in which they used the Responsibility for Negative Outcomes scale (see Appendix 1c), which will indicate how much responsibility they tend to take.