

VR: Faces of Deaf Consumers

Situational Assessment:

Presentation:

This presentation provides a brief overview of assessing interpreting situations. The lecture is approximately 24 minutes long and is provided in ASL. Clicking on the link will take you to a new page. You may be prompted to download viewing software. Do not use Firefox to view the presentation.



<http://bit.ly/Faces-Situational>

Demand-Control Schema and Pre-assignment considerations:

When called upon to interpret in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) settings, there are many considerations to contemplate. Given the limited scope of this module, we will focus on a few in this discussion: applying some aspects of the Demand-Control Schema to consider at the pre-assignment stage, resources to enhance interpretation quality, and actively monitoring the one's own interpretation process. The presumption for this discussion is that students have had exposure to the concepts in the past and this discussion will serve as a review. However, if this content is new, this presentation can serve as a primer that may lead to further learning activities.

In the 1990s, occupational researchers, Karasek and Theorell found that work-related stress was often the result of the interplay between the challenges (demands) of the job and the resources such as skills and knowledge (controls) that a worker possesses. This Demand-Control theory was applied to interpreting by Dean and Pollard beginning in 2001. They identified four categories of demands faced by interpreters: environmental

demands, interpersonal demands, paralinguistic demands, and intrapersonal demands.

Environmental demands speak to the physical aspects of the interpreting setting such as room layout, acoustics, sight lines, and temperature. The interpersonal demands are factors affected by the interplay between the consumers such as cultural, power and information disparities. Paralinguistic demands relate to expressive communication of the consumers such as the presence of accents or varied signing styles. Lastly, Intrapersonal demands address the internal state of the interpreter with regard to bodily functioning such as hunger and thoughts that may interfere with the interpreter's attention or engagement.

Dean & Pollard describe controls as resources that interpreters use to address demands present in the interpreting situation. Examples of controls include language and interpreting skills, unique knowledge, special preparation for an assignment, and/or other resources. It is important to note that the term "control" here is used as a noun and does not infer that interpreters should "take control" of a situation.

The four demand categories outlined above can provide a template for analysis of an interpreting situation allowing for analysis of the effectiveness of various controls. Dean & Pollard have proposed three temporal aspects of this analysis: pre-assignment controls, assignment controls and post-assignment controls. The focus of our discussion will be on pre-assignment controls.

At times, there may be insufficient time or information to conduct a thorough assessment using the Demand-Control Schema. In such a case, a quick analysis of the consumers (both deaf and hearing) and the setting can help to identify unique challenges in the situation that can inform interpreting-related decisions.

Once the demands or requirements of the situation are understood, an interpreter can assess the controls they have at their disposal to successfully interpret in the situation and articulate the resources needed for success.

These resources may include requesting a hearing team interpreter to accompany the interpreter. Such a team can provide direct interpreting and offer an important service of monitoring interpretations for accuracy and providing assistance as needed. A Deaf Interpreter may be requested for assistance. Deaf Interpreters typically work with intra-lingual interpretations that is working from a signed utterance and then converting it into a target interpretation that is understandable to the consumer. Deaf Interpreters are trained in a variety of techniques to enhance communication. They can be especially helpful with a Deaf person who's ASL or English fluency may be limited. For more information about Deaf Interpreter/Hearing Interpreter Teams, visit the NCIEC Module on this topic. Another resource to explore is the Deaf Interpreting Institute website (if the link doesn't work, please copy and paste): <http://www.diinstitute.org/>

Another strategy may be choosing to use Consecutive Interpretation in a given situation.

Requesting and utilizing these resources will require approaching the hiring entity (VR counselor, Community Rehabilitation Program or interpreter referral agency) and providing a rationale. This is where a template/checklist can help bolster the request.

If these resources are unavailable, the interpreting assignment should be postponed until they are provided. If the resources cannot be provided, and the interpreter believes that a successful interaction cannot occur without them, the assignment should be declined.

Deliberate Practice and the Five-Step Follow-up:

If an interpreter wishes to improve their interpreting skills, a key strategy is practice. However, that practice has to be conducted in controlled settings to minimize the impact of interpreting errors. Expert Performance is achieved through *Deliberate Practice*. Ericsson defines Deliberate Practice as “tasks that are initially outside of their current realm of reliable performance, yet can be mastered within hours of practice by concentrating on critical aspects and by gradually refining performance through repetitions and feedback” (Schafer, p. 17). For more information on Deliberate Practice and developing expertise, read the article provide in resources, *Developing Expertise Through a Deliberate Practice Project*.

Creating a Deliberate Practice plan can help identify areas for improvement and activities to address those needs. Patrie describes a self-assessment process that may be useful when practicing with the video excerpts available elsewhere in this module. When reviewing a practice interpretation you’ve recorded, consider the key factors Patrie outlines a Five-Step Follow-up for assessment of one's work. The five steps are: transcribe the interpretation, revise the interpretation to reflect accuracy, identify miscues in the original interpretation, determine the extent of the impact of these errors, if any, and develop an action plan to address the short-comings in the interpretation.

Ideally, conferring with an instructor or mentor through this process will provide a neutral perspective that can identify aspects of the work that may be missed. Further, these individuals can suggest strategies for improving performance. Employing the Five-Step Follow-up over time can allow interpreters to hone in on weak aspects of their work and document progress. Practicing deliberately is the only way to improve performance.

ACTIVITIES:

Ask students to create an assessment checklist that includes D-C/S pre-assignment demand categories. Students can then identify controls they can/may employ. This checklist can assist students in determining what pertinent questions should be asked before accepting an assignment.

Students not familiar with Demand-Control Schema, may prepare a checklist using the “situational assessment approach” also discussed in the presentation.

Create a template to use as a consumer profile that includes information about cultural identity, communication style, educational background, immigration status, presence of disabilities, etc.

Go to the “Video Clips” tab and observe one of the clips. Though it is not possible to interact with the Deaf consumer, complete the consumer profile created above making some educated guesses about the linguistic, educational and cultural background of the individual that could impact an interpreted event.

Create a hypothetical interpreting assignment for the student, such as:

You’ve been asked to interpret a meeting between a non-signing VR counselor and a Deaf person interested in VR services. The focus will be on setting a vocational goal. You have observed several similar meetings but have not interpreted one personally yet. The deaf consumer has forwarded a video clip to you to familiarize you with his/her signing style. Please observe this clip. Using the consumer profile template and the D-C/S pre-assignment assessment checklist, make a determination if this is an assignment you should accept. If so, what, if any, supports will you need for a successful interpreted interaction.

If a Hearing Interpreter team is needed, provide a written justification that can be submitted to the hiring agency.

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Though this module is not focused on skills improvement, you may choose one of the video clips provided in the next section and prepare a spoken English translation of the clip. Record the translation and apply the Five-Step Follow-Up described by Patrie.

Prepare a Deliberate Practice Plan identifying, which clips you will translate and how you will record the Five-Step Follow-Up insights you discover perhaps, using rubrics or

tables. Commit to a daily or weekly number of clips you will translate. Share your translations and supporting documentation with your interpreting instructor.

References:

Dean, R. K. & Pollard, R. Q. (2001). The application of demand-control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 6(1), 1-14.

Patrie, C.J. (2004). *Consecutive interpreting from English*. San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press

Schafer, T. (2011). Developing expertise through a deliberate practice project. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 3(1), 17-27.

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