

VR 101: History, System & Process

Interpreter Perspectives on Working in VR Settings:

The following videos share some insights from interpreters about why they enjoy working in vocational rehabilitation settings.

ASL Reflections



Click this link to access the reflections: <http://youtu.be/71772hXgxYQ>

English Reflections



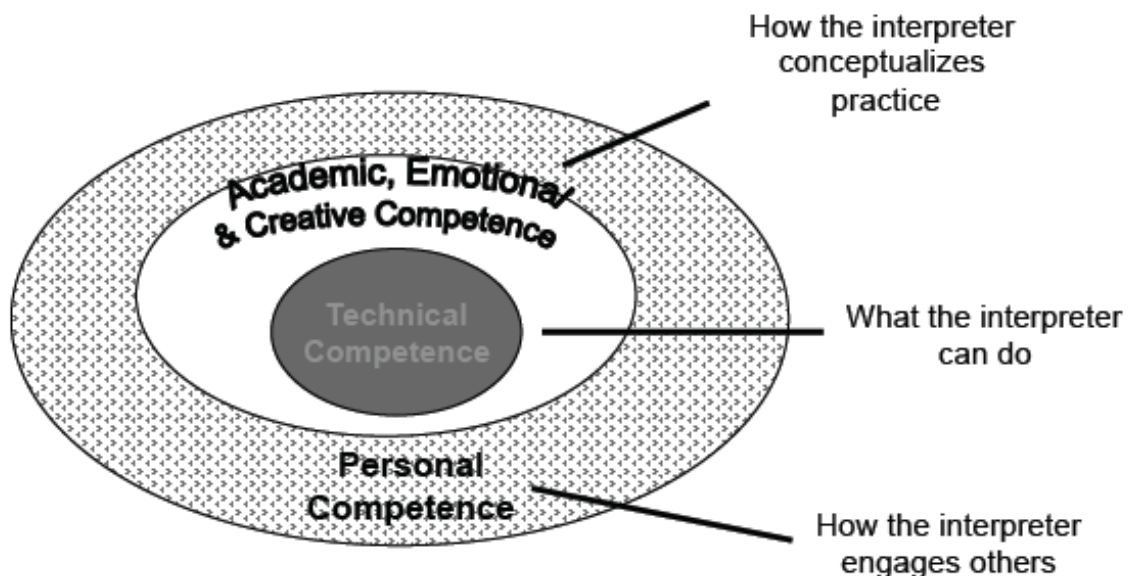
click this link to access the reflections: <http://youtu.be/Ps9-KUyGw7I>

Relational Autonomy in VR Settings

It is important to note that out of their experiences, it is clear that interpreters need to understand more about VR settings than just the language that is used there. They must also understand the larger context to the work of the VR system and how that connects to American values related to work and meaning.

To have a clearer approach to interpreting in VR settings, the concept of "relational autonomy" as introduced by Anna Witter-Merithew, Brenda Nicodemus, and Leilani Johnson, can be particularly helpful. Relational autonomy refers to the ability to make decisions and act upon them that interpreters have, but characterizes that decision-making ability as being relational. That is, our decision latitude depends on our relationship with the others involved in an interaction. To be effective, interpreters need to know more than just how to interpret between two languages, but also to understand how the practice of interpreting fits within the different systems they encounter. (In this case, that means the vocational rehabilitation system, but it is transferrable to other settings.) Finally, an interpreter must understand how to engage with other people within those contexts - whatever language those people speak or whatever cultural experience they come out of.

Anna Witter-Merithew developed this graphic to help explain those different competences.



The interpreters who reflected in the videos shared some examples of competencies that would fit into these different categories. As you move forward through this process, please keep this broader framework in mind as you try to develop all of the required competencies.

The complete article by Anna Witter-Merithew, Leilani Johnson, and Brenda Nicodemus is available in this unit.

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