VRS Research
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DEMYSTIFYING THE “IT”: WHAT A SUPERIOR VRS INTERPRETER DOES

NATIONAL VIDEO INTERPRETER SYMPOSIUM
GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY
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Introductions
- Me
- You

Workshop Objectives
- Present Findings of Competency Research and consider
  - Implications for current practitioners
  - Implications for interpreter education
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- Research Background
  - Documented shortage, education and training of interpreters has not kept pace with the need for both
    - Future interpreters
    - Current VRS interpreters

Diagram:
- 4 yr ITP
- 2 yr ITP
- Induction
- Induction (OJT)
- Certification
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Interpreter Education and Training

- Moving from deontological (rule based) to teleological (goal based)
- Adding more elements to the basic linguistic approach (environment, participants, dynamics, etc)
- Motives of doing right (following rules) vs doing good (adding value and having virtue) is causing conflict
- Rhetoric vs defacto (what we say we do vs what we really do) is surfacing in VRS
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• Study of Experts
  ○ Chess: deceptively simple two player game with alternation of moves
  ○ VRS: deceptively simple telephone exchange: callers take turns in a prescribed environment
  ○ Chess: Opening moves, middle games, closings that are chunked and plugged in accordingly
  ○ VRS calls have openings, middle content, closings that are chunked, schematized and intuitively categorized by objective
  ○ Chess: timed
  ○ VRS calls are accomplished in most convenient way possible
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Structure of the Study

• Groups of VRS Managers & Trainers to brainstorm around VRS qualities
  ○ Identified competency clusters
  ○ Nominated VRS interpreters for interviews

• VRS Interpreters (Novice, Competent, Expert)
  ○ Verbal Protocol Analysis vs Behavioral Event Interview
  ○ Descriptions of competencies
The Competency Clusters

1. Personal Effectiveness Skills
2. Customer Service Skills
3. Interpreting Skills
4. Technology Skills
5. Telecommunication Skills
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1E-Organizational Commitment

- **Novice**
  - “I show up on time...”
  - “it is a great atmosphere...we laugh, we enjoy the company...”

- **Competent**
  - “...(my responsibility) is the overall mission of the company as a whole...
  - “...a social responsibility for the company...”
2D: Use of Unilateral Power/Autonomy

- **Competent**
  - “...what happens is it’s a trust thing. They trust me to do my job so I can do it as I see fit.”
  - “because I feel some responsibility for my goal as the communication specialist to make that barrier go away to some extent.”

- **Expert**
  - “..and the ability to do something right and not have to question yourself all of the time...”
  - “...if they challenge you on something you thought was an acceptable decision...”
Competency Dictionary
Interesting Correlations

- Managers and Practitioners (as a whole): yes
- Managers and Expert group: yes
- Managers and Novice group: yes
- Managers and Competent group: no...hmmm
Managers chose Novice/Competent/Expert VIs and used the rating sheet to measure their work behavior:

- Novice scores were entry level (1-2)
- Expert scores were expert level (4-5)
- Competent scores were higher than average level (4-5)...hmm.
What does this mean for you?

- **Manager/Trainer**
  - Id levels of expertise in your centers and target your training needs
  - Use the language of the competencies to talk about the work and establish priorities for your center

- **VRS Interpreter**
  - Explore the expectations of your center
  - Use the language to talk about your performance
  - Choose mentors that support your particular needs
What does this mean for you?

- **VRS Provider**
  - Identify your own ranking of competencies and reconcile them with those of your workforce
  - Set aside time to dialogue with your staff about expectations and values
  - Design assessments collaboratively

- **ITP Educators**
  - Emphasize higher-order thinking skills and decision-making using teleological approaches in instruction across the curriculum
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