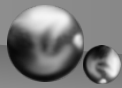# Learning to Collaborate

Tools for Increasing Your Scope of Influence: Collaboration Skills for Interpreters
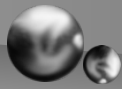
Anna Witter-Merithew, M.Ed., CAIF
CSC, SC:L, OIC:C, SC:PA, CI and CT

Setting the Stage

"He who knows others is learned.
He who knows himself is wise."
–Lao Tse

"Deaf people Inspire the Desire Part of our Learning"
-Anna Witter-Merithew
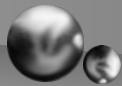
Educational Objectives

- •Increase Awareness of Communication Styles
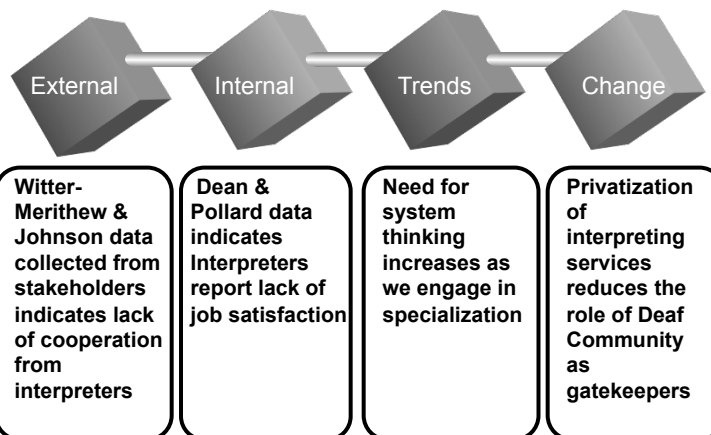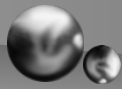- • Recognize Motivating Values and Goals
- • Practice Collaboration Techniques
- • Explore Effective Listening Skills
- •Identify Resources for Continuing Education

Why This Topic?

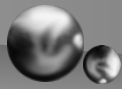| External	Internal	Trends	Change
Witter-Merithew & Johnson data collected from stakeholders indicates lack of cooperation from interpreters	Dean & Pollard data indicates Interpreters report lack of job satisfaction	Need for system thinking increases as we engage in specialization	Privatization of interpreting services reduces the role of Deaf Community as gatekeepers

Definitions

- **Collaborate:**
  To work together cooperatively with others to achieve a common goal.

- **Scope of Influence**: The range of things you can do something about and that you impact in a positive and productive manner.
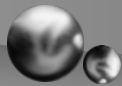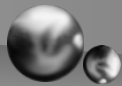
More Definitions

- **Creative Cooperation:** Based on the premise that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The essence of creative cooperation is to value differences—to respect them, to build on strengths, to compensate for weaknesses.

- **Principle-Centered Practice**: Based on basic 'laws of life'— cooperation, contribution, self-discipline, integrity. When we live these to our fullest, we validate and affirm the essential worth of ourselves and others and natural collaboration results.

Problems We Face…

- Fall into one of three categories
  - **Direct control** (problems involving our own behavior)

  - **Indirect control** (problems involving other people's behavior), or

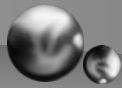 - **No control** (problems we can do nothing about—such as our past or situational realities)

Solutions to Problems…

- **Direct control**—working on and changing our habits

- **Indirect control**—changing our methods of influence.

- **No control**—genuinely and peacefully accept these problems and learn to live with them, even though we don't like them.
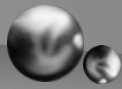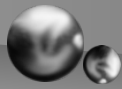
Starting with ourselves

- How do **we perceive ourselves**?
  - What evidence do we have to support our observations?

- How are we **perceived by others**?
  - What evidence do they have to support their observations?

- **Is there a disconnect** between what we believe and how we act or express ourselves?

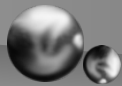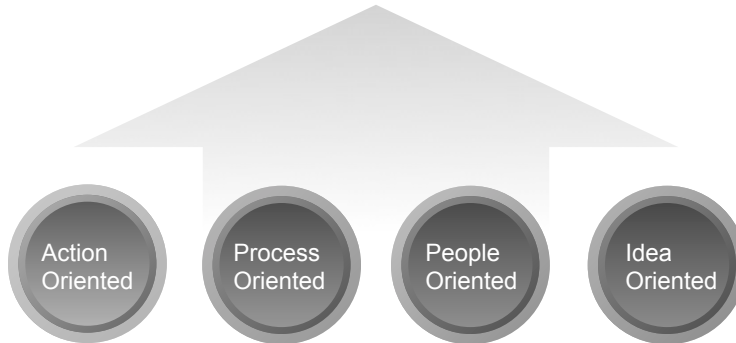## Factors Contributing to Our Style of Communication

Evolves Over Time And From Experiences

Personality

Family of Origin

Gender

Communication Style

Life Experiences

Cultural Norms
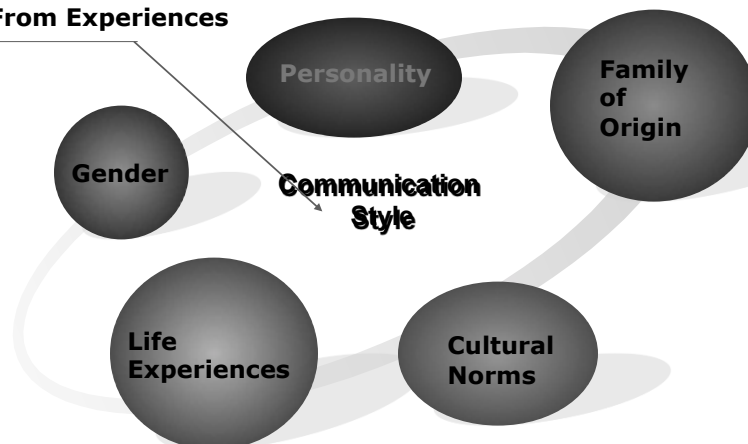
Personality Types

4 Basic Styles

Action Oriented

Process Oriented

People Oriented

Idea Oriented

Action (A) Oriented

Content-what they talk about

Process-how they behave

Results
Objectives
Performance
Productivity
Feedback
Decisions
Achievement
Change
Experience
Responsibility

Down to earth
Direct
Impatient
Decisive
Quick
Energetic

Process (PR) Oriented
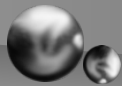
Content-what
they talk about

Process-how
they behave

Facts-details
Procedures
Planning
Organizing
Controlling
Testing
Trying Out
Analysis
Observe
Proof

Step by Step
Logical-cause
and effect
Factual
Verbose
Unemotional
Cautious
Patient

People (PE) Oriented
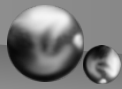
Content-what
they talk about

Process-how
they behave

People
Needs
Motivation
Teamwork
Communications
Feelings
Team Spirit
Cooperation
Beliefs
Relationships

Spontaneous
Empathetic
Warm
Subjective
Emotional
Perceptive
Sensitive

Idea (I) Oriented

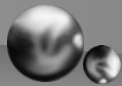**Content-**what they talk about

Process-how they behave

Concepts
Innovation
Interdependence
New Ways
Improving
Problems
Alternatives
Opportunities
Grand Designs
Issues

Imaginative
Charismatic
Ego-centered
Creative
Unrealistic
Full of Ideas
Provocative

Self-Assessment

Part 1
- **Select one statement from each pair**

- **No pair is 'either-or'**

- **Chose as spontaneously as possible**

- **There is no right-wrong answer—just what fits you the best**

Part 2
- **Circle the number of the statements you selected on the scoring sheet**

- **Count up the points you accrued for each of the 4 styles—1 point for each**

- **Overall total not to exceed 40**

- **What is your dominate style? Your secondary?**
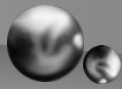
Discussion

- **What styles exist in your group?**

- **What are the implications of each style on the group process—both personal and professional?**

- **How did your individual styles impact your general discussion about the this activity?**

- **What insight can you share with the full group?**
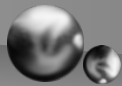
Case Study #1

- **Small groups**

- **Each member read the case study**

- **Designate a notetaker—who can also participate in the discussion process**

- **Respond to the Discussion Questions at the end**

- **Identify two or three points to share with the full group**
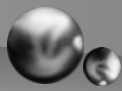
Collaboration Based on Creative Cooperation

- Know our own style and its implications

- Adapt style when working with someone whose style is significantly different

- Collaborate with individuals of differing styles to secure the broadest scope of influence
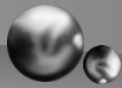
Achieving Collaboration Depends on Trust

Low Trust→ Defensive (Win-Lose or Lose-Win)→
Low Cooperation

High Trust→ Respectful (Compromise)→ Synergistic (Win-Win)
→
High Cooperation
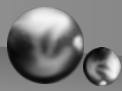
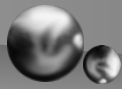## We Can Build Trust Through Principle-Centered Practice:

- Core of positive human influence
  - Cooperation
  - Contribution
  - Self-discipline
  - Integrity
- Consistent application inspires and fosters relationship
- Relationship leads to trust
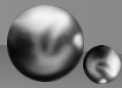
Now we can focus on increasing our influence

30 or more methods of human influence, but that most of us only know three or four. When these don't work, we move to fight or flight.—Covey (1989) *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

- Methods of positive human influence: empathy, modeling, mentoring, persuasion, encouraging, inspiring, self-revelation, risk-taking, listening, reflecting, analyzing, storytelling/analogy, networking, helping, sharing, giving, caring, nurturing, confronting, challenging, playing, inviting, respecting, valuing, complimenting, among others.

- Examples of methods of negative human influence?

## Case Study 2

- **Small groups of 4-5 individuals**

- **Each member read the case study**

- **Designate a notetaker—who can also participate in the discussion process**

- **Respond to the Discussion Questions at the end**

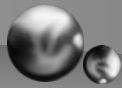- **Identify two or three points to share with the full group**

The Role of Listening

- **Many of the methods used for human influence are rooted in active and effective listening skills.**

- **What kind of a listener are you? How do you think others perceive you as a listener? Your boss, your co-workers, your family members, your friends?**
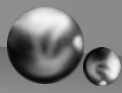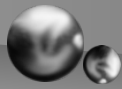
Ineffective Listeners – Chambers, 2001

- **Distracted Listener**
  - **Focused on** immediate concerns, 'urgent' **internal issues**, doing too many things at once, impatient
  - **Caused by pressure**, wrapped up in own **emotions**, unwilling or unable to **slow down** own **thought processes**

- **MIA Listener**
  - Passive, **detached, disengaged**, with little effort to give necessary attention
  - **Caused by lack of** interest or **value** for the topic or speaker, unable to understand due to complexity of content or disinterest

Ineffective Listeners

- **Selective Listener**
  - Listens to be right or confirm what is already known, **hears want they want to hear**, only hears parts that validate their own belief
  - **Caused by** lack of discipline, **lack of attention,** categorizing or judging, dismisses others

- **Contentious Listener**
  - Combative or negatively aggressive, **listen with a chip on the shoulder**, listens to reject not to process meaning
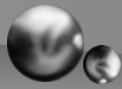 - **Caused by emotions** (fear, threat, anger, resentment, jealousy)

Effective Listeners

- Mentally and physically **committed**

- **Exercise** conscious **control**

- **Attentive to** speaker's total **message**

- Maintain keen **awareness of** alignment of **words, tone of voice, non-verbal** behavior

- Practice **open-minded** objectivity

- Convey **respect** and **courtesy**

- **Barriers**
  - Impatience
  - Information overload
  - Pre-occupation
  - Poor concentration
  - Perceived value of message
  - Jumping to conclusions
 - Pre-conceived assumptions
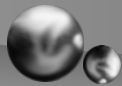
Self Assessment

- **Read each statement**

- **Put a checkmark in the column that corresponds most closely with your assessment of how frequently you perform the behavior**

- **Add up the checks for each column**

- **What things stand out as needing the most improvement?**
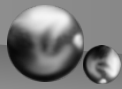
- **Discuss findings**

Beyond the Workshop

- **Practice, practice, practice—habits take time and consistency to change**

- **Revisit self-assessments and put a plan in place**

- **Create a Working Group—start small**

- **Seek some mentors**

- **Talk to co-workers about what you are learning—ask for insight and wisdom**

- **Check-in with each other**
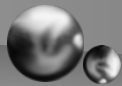
Closing Thoughts…

- Andrew Carnegie Quote:

"Collaboration and teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

- Susan Gerke, IBM, Leadership Development

"Conflict is inevitable in a team ... in fact, to achieve synergistic solutions, a variety of ideas and approaches are needed. These are the ingredients for conflict."

References

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