Social Justice: A New Model of Practice for Sign Language Interpreters?

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Improving Performance Through Leadership

Street Leverage

We must **be**
the change
we want to see
in the world.

- Mahatma Gandhi

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Why is this needed?

- Oppression of various types
- Pursue *for* and *with* Deaf individuals
- Multiple perceptions within situations

Social Justice Theory

▸ Multiple truths that recognize just and unjust situations

▸ Depends on relationships within situations

▸ Recognizes advantages and burdens

▸ Not only monetary
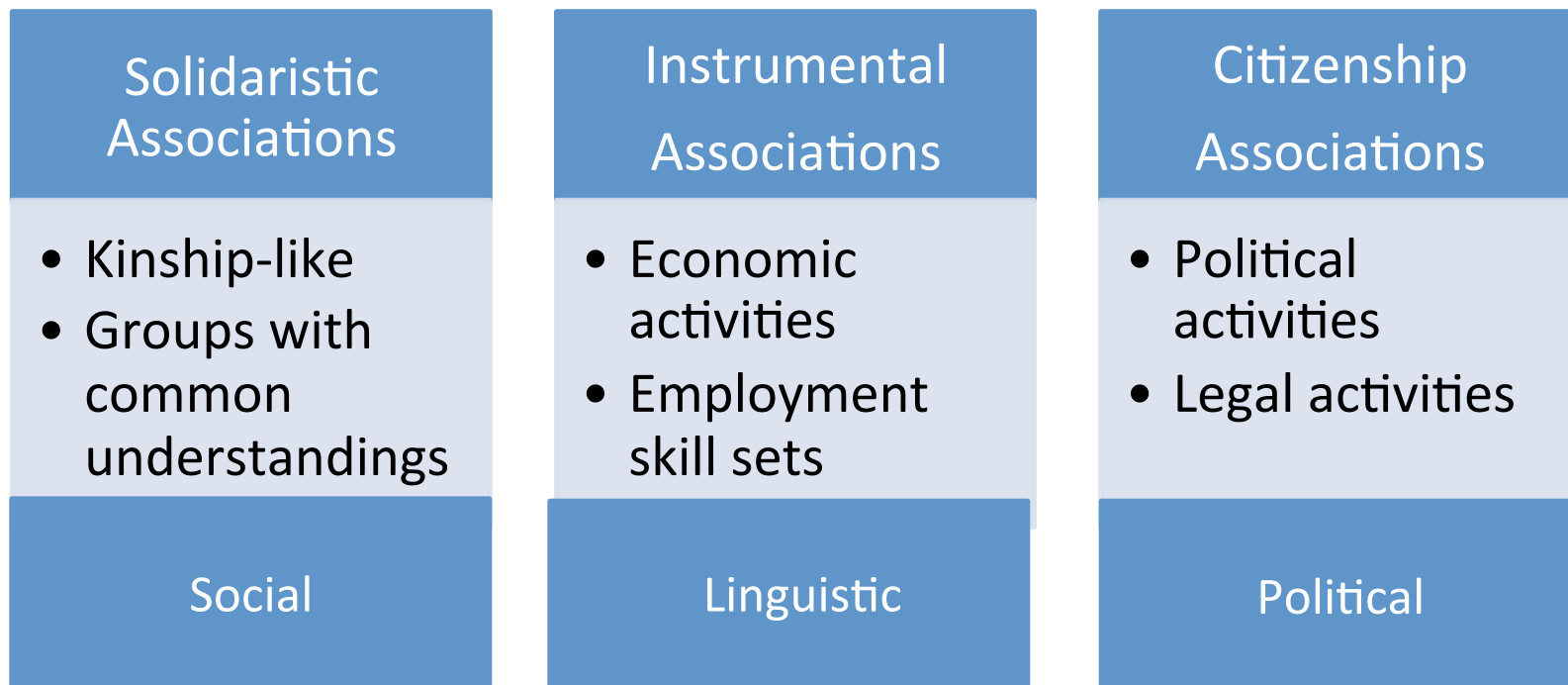
▸ Accounts for values and beliefs (cultural capital)

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Locations of Social Justice

Three Spheres of Social Justice (Miller, 1999):

Solidaristic Associations	Instrumental Associations	Citizenship Associations
• Kinship-like • Groups with common understandings	• Economic activities • Employment skill sets	• Political activities • Legal activities
Social	Linguistic	Political

Three avenues that lead to becoming members of the Deaf community (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980).

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Leadership

- Can be learned
- Some are pluralistic and match social justice theories
- Transactional-based encounters
  - Individuals comply via exchange processes
- Transformational-based encounters
  - Individuals aim for true collaboration

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Transactional Leadership

- Based on agreed-upon transactions

- Organization's vision may not be shared

- Participants are motivated by rewards and punishments

- Pros:
  - Can meet individuals' short-term objectives
  - Can encourage control via rewards

- Cons:
  - Rigid expectations
  - Adds to the process of colonization

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Transformational Leadership

- Based on four characteristics, the four I's:

  1. Individualized considerations
  2. Intellectual stimulation
  3. Inspirational motivation
  4. Idealized influence

- Promotes others' visions and goals

- Identifies deficiencies in the status quo

- Pros:
  - Can boost organizational change
  - Can meet participants' needs

  Cons:
  - Results take time
  - Lacks details on "how"

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Conclusion: A Social Justice Lens

- Appropriate for unjust situations
- Achieves via transformational leadership
- Aims to empower groups of people, which in turn can accumulate social capital, eventually changing political power
- Builds bridges between communities
- Begins with discussions with others involved

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"Transformational leaders don't start by denying the world around them. Instead, they describe a future they'd like to create instead."

Seth Godin

Thank You!

Questions/Comments

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