

Introduction to  
**VRS**  
INTERPRETING

A CURRICULUM GUIDE

**VRS**  
Interpreting Institute





# **Introduction to VRS Interpreting: A Curriculum Guide**

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VRS INTERPRETING INSTITUTE

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# Contents

<b>Sample Syllabus</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction to VRS Interpreting Syllabus.....	3
Introduction to VRS Interpreting Course Schedule .....	8
<b>Curriculum Reading List</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Lesson Plans</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Lesson 1: Introduction to VRS, Part 1</b> .....	<b>19</b>
VRS Call .....	21
VRS Internet Scavenger Hunt.....	23
<b>Lesson 2: Introduction to VRS, Part 2</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Lesson 3: Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Interpreting Settings Picture Reveal Game .....	32
<b>Lesson 4: The FCC and Legislation</b> .....	<b>35</b>
Midterm Study Guide: Introduction to VRS Interpreting.....	38
<b>Lesson 5: VRS Center Observations</b> .....	<b>40</b>
VRS Observation Guide.....	43
VRS Observation Guide: SAMPLE .....	46
<b>Lesson 6: Call/Caller Diversity and Ethical Decision Making</b> .....	<b>52</b>
Ethical Decision-Making in VRS.....	58
<b>Lesson 7: Midterm and VRS Vignette Practice</b> .....	<b>59</b>
Midterm: Introduction to VRS Interpreting .....	61
Midterm: Introduction to VRS Interpreting—Answer Key.....	64
<b>Lesson 8: IVR Systems and Automated Messages</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>Lesson 9: VRS Interpreters' Perspectives on VRS</b> .....	<b>73</b>

<b>Lesson 10: Team Interpreting in VRS</b> .....	<b>77</b>
Self-Care Presentations.....	82
<b>Lesson 11: Customer Service and Call Management</b> .....	<b>84</b>
Self-Evaluation.....	89
<b>Lesson 12: Deaf Consumers' Perspectives on VRS</b> .....	<b>91</b>
<b>Lesson 13: Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting</b> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>Lesson 14: Video Remote Interpreting Practice</b> .....	<b>97</b>
<b>Lesson 15: Self-Care for ASL/English Interpreters</b> .....	<b>101</b>
Self-Care Presentations.....	103

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## Overview of the Curriculum

- The purpose of the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* is to expose interpreting students to the environment of the video relay service (VRS) and video remote interpreting (VRI) settings, including the inherent challenges and interpreting skills required in this type of work. The intent is to provide students with sufficient information and practical experience to be able to make an informed decision about future work in these settings. It is *not* designed as a training course for working in VRS or VRI settings, nor is it intended to imply to students that they will be prepared to work in these settings upon completion of the course.
- The curriculum was designed with flexibility in mind. It can be used in one-, two-, or three-credit-hour courses that meet for a variety of time blocks, and a variety of number of days per week. Lessons may also be used independently of the entire curriculum, although certain scaffolding components will be lost if used in this fashion. There is enough material in each lesson to satisfy a three-credit-hour course. Instructors teaching one- or two-credit-hour courses will have to make decisions about which activities to eliminate based on their time constraints.

The entire *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* is in electronic format, accessible at the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* website ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)). The curriculum website contains the full curriculum in one document, which contains curriculum information and lesson plans with references to materials needed for each lesson. Downloadable lesson plans and all supporting documents, slide show presentations, and required readings are available on the website in lesson folders.

Each lesson folder contains:

- lesson plan
  - slide show presentation(s)
  - materials needed (activity descriptions, quizzes, study guides, video links, etc.)
  - readings for that lesson
  - folder with readings for the next lesson
- When you access materials on the website, you will be asked to complete a form with your name and contact information. This information is for usage data, and will be used to send occasional e-mails

asking for your experience with and feedback on the effectiveness of the curriculum. It will also be used to notify users of updates to the curriculum.

## **Acceptable use of the curriculum and videos**

- Instructors using the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* are granted permission to download and use all materials for the purpose of teaching students about interpreting in VRS and VRI settings. It may not be used for individual profit-generating activities or to train students specifically for the purpose of working in VRS and VRI settings. Instructors are granted permission to modify presentation slides as needed; however, all modified presentations should include a notation that they were modified from the original versions provided with the curriculum.
- The VRS video vignettes included with the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* are designed for use within the context of the curriculum, as suggested in the lesson plans, or as the instructor sees fit. Vignettes are designed to be used for student practice during class time, although they may be assigned as homework in some cases. Please share the actual links or other access to the videos vignettes with discretion, and only when necessary with the purpose of preserving the instructional value of the videos within the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum*.

## **Instructor Qualifications**

- Ideally, the instructor of this course will be an experienced video relay interpreter and a trained, experienced instructor. In some cases, where the instructor is not an experienced VRS interpreter, it is suggested that at the very minimum, the instructor obtain permission from a local VRS call center manager or director to spend two to three hours observing VRS calls. In cases where instructors lack experience in specific lesson topics, it is recommended that they invite guest speakers with expertise in that area to supplement or provide the lesson.

## **Scaffolding to Real-World Experience**

- Research has demonstrated that “meaningful learning will only take place if it is embedded in the social and physical context within which it will be used” (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989) and that students have a difficult time transferring knowledge learned in a classroom to application in the real world (Newman, Griffin, and Cole, 1984). The curriculum is based on a constructivist, student-centered approach to learning, with value placed on experiential learning.
- The importance of student experience in a real-world context can be found in the literature on interpreter education. For example, experiential learning theory has been used as a framework for the application of a structured approach to observations in real-world contexts where interpreting takes place (Dean and Pollard, 2012). It is clear to interpreter educators that learning takes place in a social context (Bown, 2013), and authentic context is the basis for many activities (Dean and Pollard, 2011, 2012; Major et al., 2012; Swabey and Craft Faber, 2012) reported in the literature. Context is also acknowledged as an important part of mentoring and reflective practice (Hetherington, 2012; Pearce and Napier, 2010).

- The *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* is designed to scaffold student learning to increasingly more experience with real and simulated VRS contexts with live interlocutors. Students engage in learning of content, then move to observations of interpreters at work, conversations with interpreters and Deaf community members about VRS work and experiences, engage in VRS practice with videos, practice with other students, and, finally, practice mock VRS calls with live participants.

## **Planning Mock VRS Calls**

- Mock VRS calls are interpreted events arranged by the instructor of the course with the goal of enabling students to interpret VRS calls in a safe environment that feels like a real-world VRS call experience, complete with the demands they may encounter in a real call and the ability to employ similar controls. The factors to consider when arranging mock VRS calls are selection of actors, contexts provided to the actors, ensuring a variety of actors, and consideration of technology.
- Selection of actors and call contexts: The instructor arranges for Deaf and hearing actors to play callers involved in each mock call. Each actor in a call scenario should be given the context, his or her role, and the goal for each call. For example, in a doctor's office call, the Deaf actor may play the role of patient, with the goal of making an appointment for a sick child. This actor's goal may be to get an appointment as soon as possible. The hearing actor may play the role of the office receptionist, who does not have many appointments available. The more details you can provide to the actors, such as encouraging the receptionist to ask details about the child's illness, providing the Deaf caller with the type of illness, etc., the more successful the experience will be. Additionally, actors should be given some other key ingredients to include during their conversation that address the objectives of the lesson for which the mock interpreting experience is designed to address. For example, if a lesson objective is to "practice and implement customer service/call management strategies," key points for the actors may be directed to intentionally overlap their conversations, or to express frustration. In any case, actors should be directed to continue the call for at least ten or fifteen minutes, talking about anything that may be relevant to the context. For several lessons in this curriculum, scenarios for actors are already included.
- Variety of actors: Whenever possible, arrange for a variety of actors, especially of Deaf actors. Actors should vary by gender, age, race, educational background, language use, etc. The more variety that students encounter, the better prepared they are to face a variety of consumers in the real world of interpreting.
- Choices for technology: To simulate mock calls, the hearing caller should connect to the student interpreter on the telephone, and the Deaf caller should connect to the student interpreter through some type of videoconferencing technology, using a tablet, computer, or videophone. Ideally, all participants in the call should be in separate rooms, and can even connect remotely. It is recommended that students use a headset and an actual telephone to create as much authenticity as possible. This allows students to practice typing in numbers on a keypad, as is often required during VRS calls.

## Course Description

- This course is a knowledge/skills-based course that examines interpreting via distance technology, including video relay and video remote interpreting. The purpose of the course is to present factors that influence interpreting competence via distance technology. Lessons include both information and skill building activities to increase competence in video interpreting. In this course, students will learn federal regulations related to the VRS industry, conversation management techniques in both ASL and English, and hearing phone norms versus Deaf videophone norms. In addition, other topics and activities will include interpreting for IVR systems (phone trees) and automated messages, ad hoc teaming, and how to apply the demand control schema to the VRS/VRI setting.

## Course Goals

- When the entire curriculum is used for a course, at the end of the course students will be able to:
  1. Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
  2. Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.
  3. Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.
  4. Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
  5. Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
  6. Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.
  7. Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.

## Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

- All course goals are addressed in one or more lessons. To support these overarching course goals, more specific student learning objectives have been identified for each lesson. The course objectives that are addressed in each lesson, along with the associated student learning objectives, are listed in the table below.

	Topic	Course Goals	Student Learning Objectives In each of the following lessons, students will:
1	Introduction to the course and to VRS	<p><b>1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.</b></p> <p><b>2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the history of the VRS field.</li> <li>2. Describe the impact VRS has had on the Deaf community.</li> <li>3. Describe the impact VRS has had on the interpreting community.</li> </ol>

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Course Goals</b>	<b>Student Learning Objectives In each of the following lessons, students will:</b>
2	Continue introduction to VRS	<p><b>1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.</b></p> <p><b>2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.</b></p> <p><b>3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the various competencies required of VRS interpreters.</li> <li>2. Describe how those competencies were developed for VRS interpreters.</li> <li>3. Describe different approaches to improve those competencies within their scope of interpreting work.</li> </ol>
3	Community/VRI/VRS interpreting	<p><b>3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare and contrast the role and function of the interpreter in a community setting and a VRS/VRI setting.</li> <li>2. Describe the working conditions in the VRS industry.</li> <li>3. Explain the cultural competencies required of VRS interpreters.</li> <li>4. Discuss the preparation required for VRS interpreting work.</li> </ol>
4	FCC	<p><b>2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the current FCC regulations for VRS companies.</li> <li>2. Explain the impacts of the FCC regulations on VRS companies.</li> <li>3. Describe the history of FCC rates and rate cuts and how these changes have impacted VRS companies.</li> </ol>
5	VRS center observations	<p><b>3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the working conditions of VRS interpreters by providing specific examples.</li> <li>2. Explain the cultural competencies required of VRS interpreters by providing specific examples.</li> <li>3. Discuss the types of callers who use VRS.</li> <li>4. Discuss the types of calls that are made through VRS interpreters.</li> <li>5. Discuss the potential demands that may arise from different callers and call types.</li> <li>6. Discuss the controls available to interpreters during VRS calls.</li> </ol>
6	Call/caller diversity and ethical decision-making	<p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the variety of call types they may encounter when working as an interpreter in the VRS setting.</li> <li>2. Discuss various approaches to interpreting when encountering challenging customers and call topics.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate an understanding of turn taking in the VRS setting.</li> <li>4. Describe strategies that can be used to facilitate turn taking in the VRS setting.</li> </ol>

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Course Goals</b>	<b>Student Learning Objectives</b> <b>In each of the following lessons, students will:</b>
7	Quiz and video practice	<p><b>1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.</b></p> <p><b>2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.</b></p> <p><b>3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting</b></p> <p><b>4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate interpretations of a variety of call types that are common in VRS interpreting.</li> <li>2. Apply skills and strategies observed during VRS center observations to their own interpretations of VRS video vignettes.</li> </ol>
8	IVR (phone trees and automated messages)	<p><b>4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify various types of IVR systems and automated messages.</li> <li>2. Identify strategies used to interpret IVR systems and automated messages.</li> <li>3. Practice and implement strategies for navigating VRS calls that include IVR systems.</li> </ol>
9	VRS interpreters' perspectives on VRS	<p><b>3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>7.0 Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain how the diverse range of VRS consumers can create demands for VRS interpreters.</li> <li>2. Discuss varying call types (including register) that VRS interpreters may encounter.</li> <li>3. Identify how interpreters use cultural mediation to navigate through VRS calls.</li> <li>4. Discuss the potential control options interpreters use in order to meet the demands of various call and caller types.</li> <li>5. Discuss a variety of customer service approaches that can create positive experiences for Deaf VRS consumers.</li> <li>6. Describe stress and burnout and potential strategies to help alleviate them.</li> </ol>

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Course Goals</b>	<b>Student Learning Objectives In each of the following lessons, students will:</b>
<b>10</b>	Teaming and video practice	<p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the role and function of team interpreting in VRS settings.</li> <li>2. Discuss the characteristics of an effective interpreting team.</li> <li>3. Discuss further how these characteristics impact the teaming experience in a VRS environment.</li> <li>4. Describe the typical procedures used when team interpreting a VRS call.</li> <li>5. Identify what situations may cause VRS interpreters to request a team interpreter.</li> <li>6. Discuss the potential control options interpreters use in order to meet the demands of various call and caller types while working with a team interpreter.</li> <li>7. Explain the purpose of requesting and working with a team interpreter to interpret a VRS call.</li> <li>8. Discuss the impacts of team interpreting to both VRS providers and VRS users.</li> </ol>
<b>11</b>	Call management	<p><b>4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define customer service.</li> <li>2. Describe good and bad customer service.</li> <li>3. Identify challenges relating to call management.</li> <li>4. Identify strategies to meet the challenges of call management and turn taking.</li> <li>5. Practice and implement customer service and call management strategies during mock VRS calls.</li> </ol>
<b>12</b>	Deaf consumers' perspectives on VRS	<p><b>1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the history of VRS as it pertains to the Deaf consumer's experience with new technology.</li> <li>2. Explain how the diverse range of VRS consumers can create demands for VRS interpreters.</li> <li>3. Discuss varying call types (including register) of VRS consumers.</li> <li>4. Identify potential frustrations for Deaf VRS consumers when cultural barriers emerge during VRS calls.</li> <li>5. Discuss a variety of customer service approaches that can create positive experiences for Deaf VRS consumers.</li> </ol>

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Course Goals</b>	<b>Student Learning Objectives</b> <b>In each of the following lessons, students will:</b>
<b>13</b>	VRI introduction	<p><b>4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define video remote interpreting.</li> <li>2. Discuss where and how VRI is used.</li> <li>3. Discuss current perceptions of and research on VRI.</li> <li>4. Interpret a mock VRI call.</li> <li>5. Describe how interpreting through VRI technology impacts the interpreting process.</li> <li>6. Discuss the demands and controls of interpreting remotely.</li> <li>7. Further discuss how they navigated through those demands to make the mock VRI call successful.</li> <li>8. Demonstrate effective soft skills while interpreting mock VRI calls.</li> <li>9. Identify situations that may require a team interpreter during VRI calls.</li> </ol>
<b>14</b>	VRI practice	<p><b>4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.</b></p> <p><b>5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.</b></p> <p><b>6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interpret a mock VRI call.</li> <li>2. Describe how interpreting through VRI technology impacts the interpreting process.</li> <li>3. Discuss the demands and controls of interpreting remotely.</li> <li>4. Further discuss how they navigated through those demands to make the mock VRI call successful.</li> <li>5. Demonstrate effective soft skills while interpreting mock VRI calls.</li> <li>6. Identify situations that may require a team interpreter for VRI calls.</li> </ol>
<b>15</b>	Self-care presentations	<p><b>7.0 Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define self-care and assess the state of the person's own self-care.</li> <li>2. Discuss injury as defined by the interpreting field and as defined by Western health care system.</li> <li>3. Cite relevant research on self-care.</li> <li>4. Demonstrate proper standing and sitting posture.</li> <li>5. Cite important biomechanical considerations.</li> <li>6. Recognize high and low biomechanical risk tendencies.</li> <li>7. Describe with physical activity guidelines as a strategy for self care.</li> <li>8. Provide suggestions for symptom management.</li> </ol>

## Sample Syllabus

- A sample syllabus for the lessons in this curriculum has been included for your use. It can be downloaded from the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* website ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)) and modified to satisfy the requirements of your particular course and institution.

## Lesson Plans and Activities

- All lesson plans, activity descriptions and other materials needed for each class are available electronically on the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)). Folders for each lesson are available on the website, which include electronic copies of the lesson plan, slide show presentations, activity descriptions, materials, video links, website links, and required readings. For your convenience, each lesson plan is also included in this curriculum document.

## VRS Vignette Links

- Seventeen practice videos are included with this curriculum to be used for student practice of VRS calls. They represent a variety of callers, topics, quality of video, and types of calls, designed to be representative of typical VRS calls. They are incorporated into the curriculum in the beginning and middle lessons, with the goal of moving toward practice with live individuals during the later lessons in the curriculum.
- Some videos have space for the interpreter to introduce the call as an interpreted phone call, and some do not. This provides some variety as well as an opportunity to practice an introduction.
- Each video has been suggested as appropriate for a specific lesson, but may be used at other points in the curriculum. See the VRS vignette chart for characteristics of videos to ensure that appropriate scaffolding of information has occurred before use in any particular lesson.
- There are two ways to access the videos: via YouTube links or Vimeo links. Vimeo links all have the same password: VRSCurriculum. YouTube links are not password protected, so please use these links with discretion. Vimeo links are in the lesson plans. YouTube links can be found in the separate video links document.

## Development of the Curriculum

- The development team for the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* consisted of trained and experienced interpreter educators who also had training and experience in working as VRS interpreters. Upon completion of the curriculum by the development team, the course was piloted for a semester in two separate and distinct institutions, Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Salt Lake Community College.

- Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf is located in Rochester, New York. One of two pilot courses for the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* was a three-credit-hour American Sign Language and Interpreting Education elective course, taken by fourth-year interpreting students in their final semester before graduation. The course was of average size, with nine students, and was taught by a full-time lecturer.
- Salt Lake Community College is located in Salt Lake City, Utah. The other pilot course for the *Introduction to VRS Interpreting Curriculum* was a two-credit-hour American Sign Language interpreting elective course, taken by second-year interpreting students in their final semester before graduation. The course was small, with four students, and was taught by an adjunct faculty member.

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Dean, R. K. and R. Q. Pollard. (2012). "Beyond 'Interesting': Using demand control schema to structure experiential learning. In L. Swabey and K. Malcolm (eds.), *In our hands: Educating healthcare interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 77–103.

Hetherington, A. (2012). "Supervision and the interpreting profession: Support and accountability through reflective practice." *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 4, no. 1: 46–57.

Major, G., J. Napier, and M. Stubbe. (2012). "'What happens truly, not textbook!': Using authentic interactions in discourse training for healthcare interpreters." In L. Swabey and K. Malcolm (eds.), *In Our hands: Educating healthcare interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 27–52.

Newman, D., P. Griffin, and M. Cole. (1984). "Social constraints in laboratory and classroom tasks." In B. Rogoff and J. Lave (eds.), *Everyday cognition: Its development in social context*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 172–93.

Pearce, T., and J. Napier. (2010). "Mentoring : A vital learning tool for interpreter graduates." *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 2: 58–75.

Swabey, L., and Q. Craft Faber. (2012). "Domains and competencies for healthcare interpreting: Applications and implications for educators." In L. Swabey and K. Malcolm (eds.), *In Our hands: Educating healthcare interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1–26.



# **SAMPLE SYLLABUS**



# Introduction to VRS Interpreting

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**Instructor:**

**E-mail:**

**Phone:**

**Office Location:**

**Office Hours:**

**Course Hours:**

**Course Location:**

**Pre-requisite Course(s):**

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## Course Description

This course is a knowledge/skills-based course that examines interpreting via distance technology, including video relay and video remote interpreting. Lessons include both information and skill building activities to increase competence in video interpreting. The purpose of the course is to present factors that influence interpreting competence via distance technology. In this course, students will learn federal regulations related to the VRS industry, conversation management techniques in both ASL and English, and hearing phone norms versus Deaf videophone norms. In addition, other topics and activities will include interpreting for IVR systems (phone trees) and automated messages, ad hoc teaming, and how to apply the demand control schema to the VRS/VRI setting.

## Required Readings and Other Materials

- Weekly class readings; reading list included with syllabus
- Digital storage; flash drive
- Department tablet or other camera for recording purposes

## Course Goals

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
2. Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.
3. Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.

4. Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
5. Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
6. Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.
7. Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.

## **Accommodations**

Students with disabilities needing accommodations such as: special test arrangements, interpreting, note taking, taped textbooks, tutoring, equipment, and medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities under the ADA, must contact\_\_\_\_\_.

## **Methods of Evaluation**

**Written Assignments:** Throughout the semester, written assignments will be given. Papers should be typed in a standard 12-inch font, with 1-inch margins and double-spaced. Written assignments are due as listed on the course schedule. Interpreters must demonstrate proficiency in English as well as ASL; therefore, assignments will be graded on content as well as grammar, conventions, and spelling. If you need help with writing or proofreading, free assistance is available in the Writing Center.

**Assignments are listed in the order they are due. Assignment due dates are available on the last page of the syllabus, in the Course Schedule.**

**Show What You Know (SWYK):** Weekly readings will be assigned and should be read before class. At the beginning of each class session, students will be asked to “show what you know” based on what has been learned from the assigned material for the week. SWYK may take the form of short quizzes, essay questions, activities, games, or discussions. A three-by-five card with handwritten notes is acceptable to use.

SWYK cannot be made up except in the case of an *excused* absence. The course schedule will identify which readings SWYK content will be taken from.

**VRS Vignette Practice Interpretations:** There will be several opportunities throughout the semester to practice interpreting recorded VRS scenarios. Credit will be earned for participation in each practice session. Students will engage in a debrief session with other students or the entire class after each interpretation practice session. Students should be prepared to record each practice interpretation.

**VRS Call:** Surprisingly, many interpreters who enter the field of video relay service have never even experienced a video relay call from the perspective of a consumer. The purpose of this assignment is to build schema for what it is like to communicate with a person who is Deaf, through a video relay interpreter. Students will either observe a Deaf individual placing a VRS call or reflect on a time they personally placed a VRS call to a Deaf individual. Students will write a one-page reflection of either experience, describing thoughts, observations, and lessons learned from the call. The grading rubric is available online.

**Midterm Quiz:** A written midterm will cover material from class readings, discussions, and lectures, which includes the following lessons: “Introduction to VRS,” “Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting” and “The FCC and Legislation.” A study guide will be distributed during class.

**VRS Observation Reflection:** During the semester, students will visit a local VRS call center to participate in VRS observations. Afterward, students will reflect on the experience, noting thoughts and what was learned during the observation. No call content is allowed in the reflection. There is no page limit to the assignment; however, reflections should illustrate critical thinking and thoroughly detail the experience at the VRS center. The grading rubric is available online.

**Ethical Decision Making:** The ethics of working in VRS are governed by both FCC regulations and the CPC. An ethical decision-making assignment will be given that allows you to analyze potentially difficult situations a VRS interpreter may face. Use class discussions, VRS observations, panel discussions, and knowledge of the CPC to analyze these situations and compose your response. The grading rubric is available online.

**Live Interpretations:** There will be two opportunities during the semester to practice interpreting live VRS/VRI scenarios. For a live interpretation, a Deaf and hearing person(s) will communicate through an interpreter (the student) via the VRS/VRI platform. The assignment is pass/fail; students earn credit from participation and implementing call management strategies during the interpreting process. Please be prepared to record each of your practice interpretations. The feedback form is available online.

**Self-Evaluations:** Following the live interpretation(s), students will reflect upon their experience and compose a self-evaluation. Within the self-evaluation, students need to include what specific call management strategies they implemented into their work and how each was executed. After, students should then discuss if those strategies were executed successfully (including time stamps where applicable) and then explain why or why not. Students may also include general feedback about their work, but a majority of the self-evaluation should be focused on discussion of the implementation of call management strategies. The self-evaluation form is available online.

**Self-Care Presentations:** When working in the video relay industry, interpreters often need to take a personal inventory of their mental, physical, emotional, psychological, and even spiritual welfare. Students will investigate an approach to self-care and present their findings in class at the end of the semester. More information will be shared during class.

**Final Exam:** Optional. TBD.

## **Policies**

**Late Work Policy:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will only be worth 50 percent credit.

## Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct

Your work will be graded on an honor system. Submitting work indicates that you have made a serious attempt to thoroughly complete the assignment. Cheating, plagiarism, or any dishonest work violates the honor system and will result in the automatic failure of the assignment and/or course. College administrators may administer further repercussions.

**Cell Phones and Laptops:** Turn cell phones and laptops off while in class. If you must be available to respond to an emergency call or text, please inform the instructor ahead of class and then leave the class to respond and return promptly. Ignoring this policy will not be tolerated. Student will be asked to leave class if adherence to this policy becomes a problem.

## Grading

Show What You Know (SWYK):	140	14 weeks x 10 points
VRS Vignette Practice	120	6 class sessions x 20 points
VRS Call	50	1 x 50 points
Midterm Quiz	50	1 x 50 points
VRS Observation Reflection	40	1 observation x 40 points
Ethical Decision Making	50	1 x 50 points
Live Interpretations	200	2 x 200 points
Self-Evaluations	200	2 evaluations x 100 points
Self-Care Presentation	150	1 x 150 points
(Final Exam—optional)*	(100)	(1 x 100 points)
<b>Total Possible:</b>	<b>1000</b>	

\*Final Exam not included in point total

**Written work:** 33% of your grade

**Interpreting work:** 67% of your grade

## Grade Breakdown

940–1000 pts.	A
900–939 pts.	A-
870–899 pts.	B+
840–869 pts.	B
800–839 pts.	B-
770–799 pts.	C+
740–769 pts.	C
700–739 pts.	C-

670–699 pts.	D+
640–669 pts.	D
600–639 pts.	D-
000–599 pts.	F

## Introduction to VRS Interpreting

### Course Schedule (subject to revisions)

Lesson	Date	Lesson Topic(s)	Skill(s)	Reading Due and SWYK Content	Assignment Due
1		Introductions Overview of the Course and Syllabus Introduction to VRS, Part 1	Using a videophone	None	None
2		Introduction to VRS, Part 2	2-D vs. 3-D technology Video interpreter competency	Readings: [1] SPP VRS (2007), [2] Lightfoot (2005), [3] NCIEC (2010) "VRI Steps Report," 16–43  <i>Bring to class:</i> NCIEC (2007) "Competencies"  <b>SWYK #1:</b> SPP VRS (2007)	None
3		Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting <b>VRS Vignette Practice</b>	Working in the VRS environment	Readings: [1] Taylor (2005), [2] NAD (2008)  <b>SWYK #2:</b> Taylor (2005)	<b>VRS Call</b>
4		The FCC and Legislation <i>Optional: Guest Speaker</i>		Readings: [1] FCC (2011), [2] Snowden (2002), [3] FCC Consumer Facts, [4] Maffia (2015)  <b>SWYK #3:</b> Snowden (2002) and Facts	None
5		VRS Call Center Observations		Readings: [1] Bailey (2005), [2] Taylor (2009), 49–64  <b>SWYK #4:</b> VRS Observation Participation	None
6		Call/Caller Diversity Ethical Decision Making <b>VRS Vignette Practice</b>	Deaf and hearing phone culture intimate register activating Schema	Reading: Lightfoot (2007)  <b>SWYK #5:</b> Lightfoot (2007)	<b>Midterm Study Guide</b>
7		<b>Midterm VRS Vignette Practice</b>		Readings: None  <b>SWYK #6:</b> Midterm	None

8	IVR Systems Automated Messages <b>VRS Vignette Practice</b>	Interpreting phone trees	Reading: Weisenbert and Garcia (2007)  <b>SWYK #7:</b> Weisenbert and Garcia (2007)	<b>VRS Observation Reflection</b>
9	VRS Interpreters' Perspective on VRS	Internal customer experience	Reading: Alley (2013)  <b>SWYK #8:</b> Questions for panelists	Questions for panelists
10	Team Interpreting in VRS <b>VRS Vignette Practice</b>	Team interpreting	Readings: [1] SPP Teaming (2007), [2] Hoza (2010) Handout, [3] Rainey (2013) Intro, Conclusion and Findings  <b>SWYK #9:</b> In-class activity	<b>Ethical Decision Making</b>
11	Call Management Customer Service <b>Live Interpreting Practice</b>	Providing quality customer service Turn taking	Readings: [1] Holcombe (2014), 47–64, [2] Metzger (2005), [3] Roy (1993), [4] Warnicke (2012), [5] Zimmer (1998)  <b>SWYK #10:</b> Homework Activity	Homework activity from Lesson 10
12	Deaf Consumers' Perspectives on VRS	Customer experience	Reading: Alley (2009)  <b>SWYK #11:</b> Questions for Panelists	Questions for panelists
13	Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting	Video remote interpreting	Reading: SPP VRI (2007)  <b>SWYK #12:</b> SPP VRI (2007)	<b>Self-Evaluation #1</b>
14	Video Remote Interpreting Practice <b>Live Interpreting Practice</b>	Video remote interpreting	Readings: None  <b>SWYK #13:</b> Class Participation	None
15	<b>Self-Care for ASL/English Interpreters</b>	Self-care strategies	Readings: [1] Bower (2015), [2] Dean, Pollard and Samar (2010), [3] Roman and Samar (2015)  <b>SWYK #14:</b> Self-Care Presentation	<b>Self-Care Presentations</b>
16	<b>Final Exam</b> —Optional			<b>Self-Evaluation #2</b>



# **CURRICULUM READING LIST**



## Reading list:

### Lesson 2 Readings

- Interpreting via Video Work Team. (2007). “Video relay service interpreting domains and competencies.” National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from <http://www.interpretereducation.org/specialization/vrs-vri/>
- Interpreting via Video Work Team. (2010). “Steps toward identifying effective practices in video remote interpreting.” National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010\\_FINAL1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010_FINAL1.pdf) (pages 16–43).
- Lightfoot, M. H. (2005). “Close encounters of the 2-D kind.” *VIEWS* 22, no. 6.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Inc. (2007). Video relay service interpreting. Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>

### Lesson 3 Readings

- Taylor, M. (2005). “Video Relay Services Interpreting Task Force Analysis Report.” Distance Opportunities for Interpreting Training Center, University of Northern Colorado. Retrieved from <http://www.unco.edu/cebs/asl-interpreting/pdf/library/vrs-task-analysis-report.pdf>
- National Association of the Deaf. (2015). “Position statement: VRI services in hospitals.” Retrieved from: <https://www.nad.org/?s=VRI+services+in+hospitals>.

### Lesson 4 Readings

- Federal Communications Commission (n.d.). “Video Relay Services: FCC Consumer Facts.” Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services>
- Federal Communications Commission (2011). In the matter of structure and practices of the video relay service program, CG Docket No. 10–51 and telecommunications relay services and speech-to-speech services for individuals with hearing and speech disabilities, CG Docket No. 03–123, further notice of proposed rulemaking. Retrieved from:
- [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf)
- Maffia, D. (2015). “Can clarity return discretion to VRS interpreters’ repertoire?”

- Retrieved from: <https://www.streetleverage.com/2015/10/can-clarity-return-discretion-to-vrs-interpreters-repertoire/>
- Snowden, K. D. (2002). "FCC adds video relay services to state relay center services." *VIEWS* 19, no. 1.

### **Lesson 5 Readings**

- Bailey, J. L. (2005). "VRS: The ripple effect of supply and demand." *VIEWS*, March, 15.
- Taylor, M. (2009). "Video relay services industry research: New demands on interpreters." Unpublished research report. Edmonton, Alberta; Interpreting Consolidated.

### **Lesson 6 Readings**

- Lightfoot, M. H. (2007). "Interpreting culturally sensitive information in VRS settings." *VIEWS*, June, 1, 17. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607\\_cultural\\_diversity1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607_cultural_diversity1.pdf)

### **Lesson 8 Readings**

- Weisenberg, J. C. and E. Garcia. (2007). "From telephone to dial tone: A look at video interpreting." *VIEWS*, June.

### **Lesson 9 Readings**

- Alley, E. (2013). "Video relay service: The path from student to professional?" *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 5, no. 2: 96–110.

### **Lesson 10 Readings**

- Rainey, S. L. (2013). "Current teaming practices in video relay service." Master of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 6. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/6/>.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). "Team interpreting." Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

### **Lesson 11 Readings**

- Holcombe, K. C. (2014). "Video relay service interpreting: Interpreters' authority, agency, and autonomy in the process of ethical decision-making." Master of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 16. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/16>.

- Metzger, M. (2005). “Interpreted discourse: Learning and recognizing what interpreters do in interaction.” In Roy, C. B. (ed.), *Advances in Teaching Sign Language Interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 101–22.
- Roy, C. B. (1993). “A sociolinguistic analysis of the interpreter’s role in simultaneous talk in interpreted interaction.” *Multilingua* 12, no. 4: 341–63.
- Warnicke, C. and C. Plejert. (2012). “Turn-organisation in mediated phone interaction using video relay service (VRS)”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, 1313–34.
- Zimmer, J. (1989). “ASL/English interpreting in an interactive setting.” In *Proceedings of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the American Translators Association*, edited by D. Hammond. Medford, N.J.: Learned Information, 225–31.

### **Lesson 12 Readings**

- Alley, E. (2012). “Exploring remote interpreting.” *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 4, no. 1): 111–19.

### **Lesson 13 Readings**

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2010). “Video remote interpreting.” Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

### **Lesson 15 Readings**

- Bower, K. (2015). “Stress and burnout in video relay service (VRS) interpreting.” *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1: Article 2. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/2>.
- Dean, R. K., R. Q. Pollard, and V. J. Samar. (2010). “RID research grant underscores occupational health risks: VRS and K-12 settings most concerning.” *VIEWS*, Winter: 41–43.
- Roman, G. A. and V. Samar. (2015). “Workstation ergonomics improves posture and reduces musculoskeletal pain in video interpreters.” *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1: Article 7. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/7>.



# LESSON PLANS



# LESSON 1

## Introduction to VRS, Part 1

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**Topics of discussion:** Introductions, overview of the course, and introduction to VRS

### Course Goals

- 1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
- 2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. Course syllabus
2. Slide show: “Lesson 1: What is Video Relay Service?”
3. Lesson activity: VRS Scavenger Hunt form
4. Lesson activity: Placing Calls Activity form

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. describe the history of the VRS field,
2. describe the impact VRS has had on the Deaf community, and
3. describe the impact VRS has had on the interpreting community.

### Student Preparation

None

### Lesson Sequence

1. Introduce and give an overview of the course and review of course syllabus.
2. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show “Lesson 1: What Is Video Relay Service?”

3. Lesson activities:

- Break up into groups of two to three. Brainstorm and then research how the VRS industry has impacted both the Deaf and interpreting communities.
- In those same groups, have students complete the VRS Scavenger Hunt form.

## Lesson Content

Lesson content is retrieved from <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>.

See supplemental lesson content document on curriculum website: [www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum).

## Next Lesson Preparation

1. Homework: VRS call
  - Due with Lesson 3

## Readings:

- Interpreting via video work team. (2010). “Steps toward identifying effective practices in video remote interpreting.” National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010\\_FINAL1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010_FINAL1.pdf), 16–43.
- Lightfoot, M. H. (2005). “Close encounters of the 2-D kind.” *VIEWS* 22, no. 6.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). “Video relay service interpreting.” Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

## Bring for class activity:

- Interpreting via video work team. (2007). “Video relay service interpreting domains and competencies.” National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from <http://www.interpretereducation.org/specialization/vrs-vri/>.

## **VRS Call**

**(50 points)**

**Explanation:** Surprisingly, many interpreters who enter the field of video relay service have never even experienced a video relay call from the perspective of a consumer. The purpose of this assignment is to build schema for what it is like to communicate with a person through a video relay interpreter. Students will either observe a Deaf individual placing a VRS call or reflect on a time they personally placed a VRS call to a Deaf individual. Students will write a one-page reflection of either experience, describing thoughts, observations, and lessons learned from the call. The grading rubric is below.

### **Requirements:**

Option 1: Contact a friend or colleague who is Deaf, and arrange to observe him or her placing a VRS call. Observe how he or she uses the videophone, connects with the interpreter, and begins and ends the call. The content of the conversation is not important.

Option 2: Recall a time where you used VRS to speak with an individual who was Deaf. Most importantly, reflect upon the experience of using an interpreter to communicate over the phone. The content of your conversation is not important.

### **Assignment Details:**

Following your conversation, write a one-page (12-point font, double spaced) reflection paper detailing your experience, and what you learned about communicating through VRS and a VRS interpreter. Discuss your first impressions of not being able to see the other person on the line. Also include your observations of the interpreter. Other questions you may consider are below.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- How does communicating through a VRS interpreter differ from communicating in person?
- What challenges in communication are posed by being in separate locations?
- How does communicating through VRS differ from placing a call directly to another hearing person?
- What communication norms did you notice (such as greeting, ending the call, hanging up)?

**Rubric:**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	All topics are addressed in detail, and all questions are answered thoughtfully.	All topics are addressed in detail, and most questions are answered but lack depth.	All topics are addressed but lack detail, and some questions are answered but lack depth.	One or more topics were not addressed. Observations lack depth.
<b>Application</b>	Information clearly relates to VRS interpreting. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to VRS interpreting. It provides one or two supporting details and/or examples.	Information lacks connection to VRS interpreting. No details or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with VRS interpreting.
<b>Conventions</b>			Formatting, punctuation, spelling, and grammar contain no errors.	Formatting, punctuation, spelling, and grammar contain multiple errors.

## VRS Internet Scavenger Hunt

**Instructions:** Search the Internet to answer the following questions about three video relay service providers.

	<b>Sorenson VRS</b>	<b>Purple</b>	<b>Convo Relay</b>	<b>Z VRS</b>	<b>Global VRS</b>
	<a href="http://www.sorensonvrs.com">www.sorensonvrs.com</a>	<a href="http://www.purple.us">www.purple.us</a>	<a href="http://www.convorelay.com">www.convorelay.com</a>	<a href="http://www.zvrs.com">www.zvrs.com</a>	<a href="http://globalvrs.com/">globalvrs.com/</a>
How do Deaf people make a VRS call through this company?					
How do hearing people make a VRS call through this company?					
How does this company provide Spanish interpreting services?					
What is voice carry over (VCO) service? Does this company provide VCO?					
How does this company provide 911 interpreting services?					
How do hearing people leave messages for Deaf people?					

	<b>Sorenson VRS</b>	<b>Purple</b>	<b>Convo Relay</b>	<b>Z VRS</b>	<b>Global VRS</b>
Does the company create video equipment and distribute to Deaf callers? If yes, what is it called?					
Where is this company's headquarters, and in what year were they established?					
Is there is a VRS center in your area? (Hint: check the job openings.)					
What job duties do VRS interpreters perform in this company?					

# LESSON 2

## Introduction to VRS, Part 2

---

**Topics of discussion:** Continue introduction to VRS, requirements of VRS interpreters

### Course Goals

- 1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
- 2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.
- 3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. Show What You Know (SWYK) discussion question
2. Slide show: “Lesson 2: Introduction to VRS, Part 2”
3. NCIEC Competencies
4. VRS vignette #1

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. describe the various competencies required of VRS interpreters,
2. describe how those competencies were developed for VRS interpreters, and
3. describe different approaches to improve those competencies within their scope of interpreting work.

### Student Preparation

#### Readings:

- Interpreting via Video Work Team. (2010). “Steps toward identifying effective practices in video remote interpreting.” National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010\\_FINAL1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRISStepsReportApril2010_FINAL1.pdf), 16–43.

- Lightfoot, M. H. (2005). "Close encounters of the 2-D kind." *VIEWS* 22, no. 6.
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). "Video relay service interpreting." Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

### **Bring for class activity:**

- Interpreting via Video Work Team. (2007). "Video relay service interpreting domains and competencies." National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. Retrieved from <http://www.interpreter-education.org/specialization/vrs-vri/>.

## **Lesson Sequence**

1. SWYK #1: Discussion question:  
What fact had you had not previously known about the VRS industry prior to reading the VRS Standard Practice Paper? Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slideshow "Lesson 2: Introduction to VRS, Part 2"
2. Lesson activities:  
Break into five groups. Each group will be assigned a competency identified by the NCIEC. Prepare a short presentation on the assigned competency, including approaches to improving specific competency.
3. VRS vignette practice:  
Practice interpreting and then debrief as a class:  
VRS vignette # 1: <http://vimeo.com/164152292>  
Password: VRSCurriculum

## **Lesson Content**

*Instructor note: We suggest the instructor read the "Steps toward identifying effective practices in video remote interpreting" study thoroughly. The lesson content and slide show outline this study in detail.*

## **Next Lesson Preparation**

### **Activities:**

Ask students to identify the competencies interpreters must have when working in the VRS setting.

- Research the current interpreter/Deaf consumer perspectives regarding:
  1. VRS
  2. VRS interpreters
  3. VRS interpreting process

Students may use vlogs, social media, interviews, and research articles to gather this information.

**Readings:**

- National Association of the Deaf. (2015). “Position statement: VRI services in hospitals.” Retrieved from: <https://www.nad.org/?s=VRI+services+in+hospitals>
- Taylor, M. (2005). “Video Relay Services Interpreting Task Force Analysis Report.” Distance Opportunities for Interpreting Training Center, University of Northern Colorado. Retrieved from <http://www.unco.edu/cebs/asl-interpreting/pdf/library/vrs-task-analysis-report.pdf>

Homework due: VRS call.

# LESSON 3

## Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting

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**Topics of discussion:** Comparison of VRS, VRI, and community interpreting

### Course Goals

3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK discussion questions
2. Lesson activity: Interpreting Settings Picture Reveal game
3. Make copies of Interpreting Settings Comparison Chart
4. Slide show: “Lesson 3: Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting”
5. Taylor, 2005. “Video Relay Services Task Analysis Report”
6. VRS vignettes #6 and #10

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. compare and contrast the role and function of the interpreter in a community setting and a VRS/VRI setting,
2. describe the working conditions in the VRS industry,
3. explain the cultural competencies required of VRS interpreters, and
4. discuss the preparation required for VRS interpreting work.

## Student Preparation

### Readings:

- National Association of the Deaf. (2015). “Position statement: VRI services in hospitals.” Retrieved from: <https://www.nad.org/?s=VRI+services+in+hospitals>.
- Taylor, M. (2005). “Video Relay Services Interpreting Task Force Analysis Report.” Distance Opportunities for Interpreting Training Center, University of Northern Colorado. Retrieved from <http://www.unco.edu/cebs/asl-interpreting/pdf/library/vrs-task-analysis-report.pdf>.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK # 2: Ask students to answer the following questions (answers will be discussed during the lecture):
  - What are three things that you believe are challenging about VRS interpreting?
  - What are three things that you believe are challenging about VRI interpreting?
  - What are three things that you believe are challenging about community interpreting?
  - Which of these settings do you think would best suit you as a new interpreter? Why?
2. Collect homework: VRS call
  - Use slide show “Lesson 3: Community/VRI/VRS Interpreting” to guide class activities.
3. Lesson activities:
  - Play Interpreting Settings Picture Reveal game to introduce lesson content to students.
  - In-class debate
    - Divide the class into three groups: VRS, VRI, and community interpreting.
    - Give each student a copy of the Interpreting Settings Comparison Chart.
    - Ask each group to take ten minutes to discuss its corresponding column on the chart and the reasons why that area of interpreting would be most beneficial to a recent graduate of an ITP program. Each group needs to include justification for the following considerations:
      - ♦ Access to the work (through companies, agencies, networking, etc.)
      - ♦ Professional development opportunities
      - ♦ Support available for a new interpreter
      - ♦ Ethical considerations (according to the Code of Professional Conduct)
      - ♦ Type of interpreting environment
    - The debate will have five (time permitting) rounds (seven to ten minutes/round)
    - Each group will elect a different spokesperson for each round. The spokesperson should discuss one of the above listed considerations.
    - The spokesperson is allowed one to two minutes to discuss their type of interpreting, promoting the benefits afforded to a new interpreter as it relates to that round’s consideration (e.g., we believe VRS interpreting would be the most advantageous for a new interpreter and his/her access to the work, because ...).
    - After the VRS, VRI, and community interpreting groups have had an opportunity to speak, each group has approximately one minute to respond to or to rebut the comments made by their fellow classmates.

4. Wrap-up discussion questions:
  - How much of what you wrote at the beginning of this class period was accurate or inaccurate? Give examples.
  - At this moment, which genre of interpreting would best suit you and why?
  - Based on today's discussion about the various types of interpreting, students choose one or two challenges that they think would be most significant to them as new graduates.
  - Students take turns naming their biggest challenge aloud.
  - Students assign themselves to small groups according to which challenge they identified.
  - In small groups, students discuss the following: "What steps can you take to prepare yourself for this aspect of the work? What one or two things can you start doing to help better prepare you for this type of interpreting work?" Note: ensure that students' answers are concrete and specific.
  - Students write down one thing that they commit to doing, and keep it with them in their notebooks.
  - Instructors can check in with students at a later date to see if they are following through on this commitment.
5. VRS vignette practice
  - Practice interpreting and then debrief as a class:
    - VRS vignette #6: <https://vimeo.com/162125576>
    - VRS vignette #10: <https://vimeo.com/164333124>  
Password: VRSCurriculum

## Lesson Extension

If the group has a solid understanding of the demand control schema, students can predict various demands on a VRS and/or community interpreter and use the DC-S framework to help them further analyze the various genres of interpreting.

## Lesson Content

This lesson will compare and contrast VRS, VRI, and community interpreting.

Below are basic definitions of each of the three types of interpreting being compared:

1. **VRS:** a free telephone relay service using video technology to allow Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons to make and receive phone calls through a sign language interpreter visible to them on a video screen. The video interpreter is in a call center environment and remotely interprets the phone conversation.
2. **VRI:** typically a fee-based service that uses video technology to facilitate communication between Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons and hearing persons who are together in the same location. The interpreter is in a call center environment and remotely interprets the face-to-face interaction.
3. **Community interpreting:** a general term used to describe the type of interpreting that enables Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons to communicate with the providers of public services so as to facilitate full and equal access to legal, health, educational, government, and social services. The interpreter travels to the setting where the interaction is taking place and interprets while in the same room as the consumers.

Interpreters in the field may be approached to work in any or all of the above arenas. Location and assignment availability, as well as interpreter preference, will influence the amount of work an interpreter does in each area (see the comparison chart in the Lesson Two content information section). Taking into consideration such things as environment, pay range, difficulty level of the work, job security, etc., interpreters currently have many employment options from which to choose. Interpreting students can benefit from understanding these similarities and differences, and use this information to aid in their discretion when making professional employment-based decisions.

- Further information about video relay services may be obtained from:
- “VRS Task Analysis Report” (Taylor 2005)
- “Video Relay Service Interpreting” RID Standard Practice Paper at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Activities:

Students will make at least one professional contact with their local VRS providers, VRI providers, and/or community agencies, and report their findings to the class during the next lesson. The following are the questions for students to ask:

- What are the requirements for employment?
- Do you have any recommendations for recent graduates of an ITP program who are interested in VRS work?

If a guest speaker is arranged for Lesson 4, ask students to bring three questions, based on the reading for Lesson 4, to class.

### Readings:

- Federal Communications Commission (n.d.). Video Relay Services: FCC Consumer Facts. Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services>
- Federal Communications Commission (2011). In the matter of structure and practices of the video relay service program, CG Docket No. 10-51 and telecommunications relay services and speech-to-speech services for individuals with hearing and speech disabilities, CG Docket No. 03-123, further notice of proposed rulemaking. Retrieved from: [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf)
- Maffia, D. (2015). “Can clarity return discretion to VRS interpreters’ repertoire?” Retrieved from: <https://www.streetleverage.com/2015/10/can-clarity-return-discretion-to-vrs-interpreters-repertoire/>.
- Snowden, K. D. (2002). “FCC adds video relay services to state relay center services.” *VIEWS* 19, no. 1.

## Interpreting Settings Picture Reveal Game

**Instructions:** Split the participants into teams. Ask each team a question in turn. When the team answers correctly, they may choose a square. At this point, you click the mouse once and a square will disappear. They can then take a guess at what the picture is. This continues until a team guesses correctly. When a team guesses correctly, you can reveal the picture by clicking on the small blue dot on the bottom right side of the slide. This will reveal the entire picture. Be careful not to click this at any other point in the game. (The picture for this game is the Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet and Alice Cogswell statue on the campus of Gallaudet University.)

Questions	Answers
1) In which setting do interpreters only interpret phone calls?	VRS
2) In which setting do interpreters work to interpret meetings, appointments, classes, etc. from a remote location? The consumers are typically together in the same location.	VRI
3) In this setting, interpreters may work inside an interpreting agency office.	VRI
4) In this setting, the consumers and interpreter are all in the same room; the work environment varies greatly and may be meetings, appointments, classes, etc.	community
5) Team interpreters are sometimes available in this environment, but often must be planned in advance.	community
6) Team interpreters almost always available immediately.	VRS
7) Responsibility for professional development often falls completely on each interpreter to seek out opportunities.	community
8) Pay range for each interpreter is competitive with national standards; paydays are typically very reliable.	VRS
9) Work locations vary greatly, according to each assignment.	community
10) Work location is the same every day.	VRS and VRI (community assignments are not very consistent)
11) Call content and consumers change constantly without interpreter discretion; the interpreter must be highly aware of his or her strengths, weaknesses, and potential conflicts of interest in order to avoid unethical behavior.	VRS
12) Interpreters have high degree of control over the types of settings and consumers with whom they work; some ethical conflicts may be avoided through applying critical thinking skills and responsible choices about accepting assignments.	VRI and community
13) Typically formal and consultative situations are interpreted.	VRI
14) Typically formal, consultative, and informal situations.	community
15) All topics common, including all genres and registers (intimate register is common).	VRS

## Interpreting Settings Comparison Chart

Feature	Video relay service interpreting	Video remote interpreting	Community interpreting
<b>Logistics</b>	Interpreting phone calls of all types; the consumers and interpreter are all in separate locations	Interpreting meetings, appointments, classes, etc. from a remote location; the consumers are typically together in the same location	Interpreting meetings, appointments, classes, etc.; the interpreter is in the same location with all consumers
<b>Type of interpreting environment</b>	Call center cubicles; consistent environment	Call center or office; consistent environment	Varies depending on assignment
<b>Control over accepting jobs</b>	Little to no discretion; must stay in calls at least ten minutes unless an ethical conflict arises	Some interpreter discretion	Encouraged interpreter discretion
<b>Professional development opportunities</b>	Company usually provides professional development opportunities; increased opportunity to use ASL to English skills in interactive situations	Interpreting agency or company may provide professional development, increased opportunity to use ASL to English skills	Responsibilities often fall on interpreter
<b>Working with peers</b>	Call center environment; team interpreters always available	Call center environment or interpreting agency office; team interpreters typically available depending on the employer	Often interpreter works in isolation or with one team interpreter; depends on the assignment, location, and employer
<b>Job security</b>	VRS services are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; individual call center hours vary	Varies depending on specific employer and assignments	Varies depending on specific employer and assignments
<b>Difficulty level of interpreting</b>	Very difficult; little or no preparation time; interpreting experience required; team interpreter support available almost immediately	Moderately difficult; some prep time; logistics of interpreters being remote; may be likely to have team interpreter support available	Moderately difficult; prep time is typical; appropriate for novice interpreters (with support); team interpreting is less common
<b>Pay range</b>	Competitive with national standards; paydays are typically very reliable	Competitive with local standards; paydays vary by the employer policies and invoicing process	Competitive with local standards; paydays vary by the employer policies and invoicing process
<b>Prerequisites/standard qualifications</b>	Preferred: interpreting experience, certification, interpreter training	Varies by employer	Varies by employer
<b>Necessary travel for work</b>	Work location is the same every day; depends on the call center location	Work location is the same every day; depends on the call center location	Work location varies greatly by assignment
<b>Mentor support</b>	Varies by employer	Varies by employer	Varies by employer

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Video relay service interpreting</b>	<b>Video remote interpreting</b>	<b>Community interpreting</b>
<b>Career advancement opportunities</b>	Varies by employer; full-time employment typically available	Varies by employer; full-time employment typically available	Varies by employer; full-time employment typically available
<b>Supervision and evaluation</b>	High amount of supervision, feedback, and support	High amount of supervision, feedback, and support	Low amount of supervision, feedback, and support
<b>Role delineation</b>	Clear role boundaries are expected due to mandated “dial tone” status of the interpreter; changing with some companies	Varies by consumers and specific setting	Varies by consumers and specific setting
<b>Ethical considerations</b>	Call content and consumers change constantly without interpreter discretion; interpreter must be highly aware of his or her strengths, weaknesses, and potential conflicts of interest in order to avoid unethical behavior	Interpreters have high degree of control over the types of settings and consumers with whom they work; some ethical conflicts may be avoided through applying critical thinking skills and responsible choices about accepting assignments	Interpreters have high degree of control over the types of settings and consumers with whom they work; some ethical conflicts may be avoided through applying critical thinking skills and responsible choices about accepting assignments
<b>Typical topics</b>	All topics permitted, including all genres and registers (intimate register calls are common)	Typically formal and consultative situations	Typically formal, consultative, and informal situations

# LESSON 4

## The FCC and Legislation

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**Topic of discussion:** FCC Regulations

### Course Goals

1.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK discussion questions
2. Slide show: “Lesson 4: The FCC and Legislation”
3. *Optional: Guest speaker lecture; available online*
4. Midterm Study Guide (found at the end of this lesson plan)

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. discuss the current FCC regulations for VRS companies,
2. explain the impacts of the FCC regulations on VRS companies, and
3. describe the history of FCC rates and rate cuts and how these changes have impacted VRS companies.

### Student Preparation

#### Activities:

- Students will make at least one professional contact with their local VRS providers, VRI providers and/or community agencies, and report their findings to the class during the next lesson. The following are the questions for students to ask:
  - What are the requirements for employment?

- Do you have any recommendations for recent graduates of an ITP program who are interested in VRS work?
- If a guest speaker is arranged for Lesson 4, ask students to bring three questions, based on the reading for Lesson 4, to class.

### Readings:

- Federal Communications Commission (n.d.). Video Relay Services: FCC Consumer Facts. Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services>.
- Federal Communications Commission (2011). In the matter of structure and practices of the video relay service program, CG Docket No. 10-51 and telecommunications relay services and speech-to-speech services for individuals with hearing and speech disabilities, CG Docket No. 03-123, further notice of proposed rulemaking. Retrieved from: [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-184A1.pdf).
- Maffia, D. (2015). "Can clarity return discretion to VRS interpreters' repertoire?" Retrieved from: <https://www.streetleverage.com/2015/10/can-clarity-return-discretion-to-vrs-interpreters-repertoire/>.
- Snowden, K. D. (2002). "FCC adds video relay services to state relay center services." *VIEWS* 19, no. 1.

### Lesson Sequence

#### 1. SWYK #3:

If a guest speaker has been arranged, students will bring three questions to class that will be addressed with the guest speaker. The instructor can check with all students to verify they have brought questions and give them points for this assignment.

If no guest speaker has been arranged, begin class with the following:

Divide students into several groups. Ask each group to discuss:

- How do FCC regulations impact VRS companies?
  - Name two specific FCC regulations, and then discuss the potential pros and cons that can impact VRS companies.
2. After students complete their discussion, have one student from each group share their discussion points with the class.
  3. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show: "Lesson 4: The FCC and Legislation." Alternatively, the following video lectures can be shown:
    - Part One: Introduction to the FCC video link: <https://vimeo.com/188170290/547b4a4ad6>

- Part Two: VRS Business and Ratemaking video link: <https://vimeo.com/188936149/b597e9820c>
- Part Three: Key FCC Rules video link: <https://vimeo.com/188941060/8e7aa06d43>

4. Pass out to students:  
Midterm Study Guide  
Due with Lesson 6

## Lesson Content

**FCC lecture**—All lecture notes can be found in the “Notes” section of the slide show. Please refer to those notes as well as any other information that can be found from the assigned readings or listed sources to prepare for the lecture.

Some lecture information was retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Activity:

- VRS center observations: Make arrangements with a local VRS center for students to visit the center and observe VRS calls, if possible. Instruct students to meet at the VRS center for class. Prepare students for their VRS observations by distributing the VRS Observation Guide and VRS Observation Guide Sample. Be sure to discuss with students what is acceptable and not acceptable to record, in order to comply with FCC regulations regarding not documenting any call content.

### Readings:

- Bailey, J. L. (2005). “VRS: The ripple effect of supply and demand.” *VIEWS*, March, 15.
- Taylor, M. (2009). “Video relay services industry research: New demands on interpreters.” Unpublished research report. Edmonton, Alberta; Interpreting Consolidated. Students read pages 49–64.

## **Midterm Study Guide: Introduction to VRS Interpreting** (Taylor 2005, RID VRS Interpreting Standard Practice Paper, FCC Regulations)

### **“Introduction to VRS Interpreting”**

Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Describe what each of the following acronyms mean:
  - FCC
  - TRS
  - CA
  - VRS
  - VI
  - VP
  - TVI
  - TTY
2. The NCIEC identified five competency domains of skills that VRS/VRI interpreters should possess. Be able to list the domains and provide examples of skills within each domain.
3. Be able to describe at least three differences between VRS and community interpreting.

### **Taylor (2005)**

Upon completion of this reading you should be able to:

1. List the three levels at which interpreters must multitask
2. List the three essential competency categories needed for successful VRS interpreting
3. Describe the call pattern differences between day and evening calls
4. List what you think are the top five most challenging differences between traditional and VRS interpreting
5. State what Taylor describes as “arguably the greatest difference between traditional interpreting and VRS interpreting”
6. List three ways that register becomes a factor in VRS interpreting
7. Describe one thing that is important for the interpreter to do in VRS interpreting since the callers cannot see each other
8. Describe at least two implications of the VRS interpreter averting his or her eyes from the Deaf or hard-of-hearing caller
9. Provide at least three examples of the types of decisions interpreters must make while interpreting

10. Provide at least three examples of moments when an interpreter may feel challenged to maintain impartiality
11. Indicate what Taylor described as the second most important skill for a VRS interpreter to have
12. List three ways that interpreters can maintain their health in a VRS environment
13. Describe at least two types of information that interpreters should keep confidential
14. Describe at least three impacts that VRS has had on the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community
15. Describe at least three ways that VRS has impacted the work of interpreters

### **“RID SPP—VRS Interpreting”**

Upon completion of this reading you should be able to:

1. List possible implications each of the following FCC provisions has on the interpreter and/or collective interpreting community:
  - a. Operation hours of 24/7
  - b. Speed of Answer rule
  - c. 911 services
  - d. Spanish interpreting operation hours of 24/7
  - e. Video mail services
    - State a few of RID’s recommendations for VRS interpreters
    - State the FCC’s requirement for the physical location of Deaf and hearing participants while using VRS
    - Several workplace concerns associated with VRS interpreting have been identified in the RID Standard Practice Paper. Pick two different concerns and be able to discuss creative approaches or solutions an interpreter might employ to address the concerns.
    - Briefly define the following three systems/programs that RID uses to help advocate for the quality, qualifications and quantity of interpreters:
      - ♦ National Testing System
      - ♦ Certification Maintenance Program
      - ♦ Ethical Practices System and NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct

### **“The FCC and Legislation”**

Upon completion of this lecture, you should be able to:

- Describe how the FCC compensates VRS companies for VRS calls..
- Describe at least five FCC rules as described in the FCC lecture.

# LESSON 5

## VRS Center Observations

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**Topic of discussion:** Visit a local VRS center for observations

### Course Goals

- 3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.

### Materials Needed

- 1. SWYK—VRS observation participation
- 2. VRS Observation Guide (found at the end of this lesson plan)
- 3. VRS Observation Guide Sample (found at the end of this lesson plan)

*Instructor Note: Prior to this lesson, make arrangements with a local VRS center for students to visit the center and observe VRS calls, if possible. Ask students to meet at the center for the class session. Work with manager of the center regarding preferences for notes students make about their observations. Share the VRS Observation Guide with the manager. Find out if they will collect the observation guide before the students leave the center, or if they will allow students to take it with them.*

Prepare students for their observations by distributing the VRS Observation Guide and VRS Observation Guide Sample. Be sure to discuss with students what is acceptable and not acceptable to record, in order to comply with FCC regulations regarding not documenting any call content.

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1. describe the working conditions of VRS interpreters by providing specific examples,
- 2. explain the cultural competencies required of VRS interpreters by providing specific examples,
- 3. discuss the types of callers who use VRS,

4. discuss the types of calls that are made through VRS interpreters,
5. discuss the potential demands that may arise from different callers and call types, and
6. discuss the controls available to interpreters during VRS calls.

## Student Preparation

### Activity:

- VRS center observations: Make arrangements with a local VRS center for students to visit the center and observe VRS calls, if possible. Instruct students to meet at the VRS center for class.
  - Prepare students for their VRS observations by distributing the VRS Observation Guide and VRS Observation Guide Sample. Be sure to discuss with students what is acceptable and not acceptable to record, in order to comply with FCC regulations regarding not documenting any call content.

### Readings:

- Bailey, J. L. (2005). "VRS: The ripple effect of supply and demand." *VIEWS*, March, 15.
- Taylor, M. (2009). "Video relay services industry research: New demands on interpreters." Unpublished research report. Edmonton, Alberta; Interpreting Consolidated. Students read pages 49–64.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #4: Students receive credit for arriving on time and participating in the VRS call center observations. Instructor should monitor the observations to ensure appropriate student behavior and participation.
2. Lesson Activities:  
Sequence of activities will depend on the contact at the VRS center, but ideally, activities will proceed as follows:
  - Students meet VRS center director/manager and tour the VRS center
  - Students observe VRS calls and interpreters, using the VRS Observation Guide to focus their observations. If possible, students should observe three different video interpreters. Ideally, time will be allowed after each observation for the interpreter to discuss observations with the student.
  - VRS center manager/director may need to approve the VRS Observation Guide before use, and may not allow any notes to be removed from the center. This should be discussed with the center managers prior to observations.
  - After observations, students meet with the instructor to discuss observations and ask questions.
3. Wrap-Up Discussion:  
Lead students in a discussion of the following:
  - How is the role and function of the interpreter in a VRS setting different from that of an interpreter in a community setting? How are they similar? Provide some examples.

- How are the working conditions of VRS interpreters different from those of an interpreter in a community setting? How are they similar? Provide some examples.
- What cross-cultural mediations did you observe in VRS interpreters? Provide some examples.
- What types of callers did you observe?
- What types of calls did you observe? What were the variations in register type?
- Provide examples of demands you observed. What types of controls were available to the interpreters you observed? Would you have had the same controls available to you?

## Lesson Extension

If possible, arrange for students to continue observations at a VRS center throughout the semester.

*Instructor note: For a sociological perspective on the work of VRS interpreters, see Brunson, J. L. (2011). Video relay service interpreters: Intricacies of sign language access. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.*

## Next Lesson Preparation

1. Homework: VRS observation reflection
  - Following the observation, students will write a reflection paper detailing the experience. Include what was learned while observing VRS interpreters. Further, discuss first impressions of witnessing a VRS call from the interpreter's perspective.
    - Due with Lesson 8.

### Reading:

- Lightfoot, M. H. (2007). "Interpreting culturally sensitive information in VRS settings." *VIEWS*, June, 1, 17. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607\\_cultural\\_diversity1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607_cultural_diversity1.pdf).

## VRS Observation Guide

Use this guide to focus your observations of VRS calls. Remember: do not record any information that is potentially identifying, or unnecessary details, as calls are confidential. FCC regulations prohibit disclosing any content of an interpreted conversation during a VRS call.

### DO:

VRS Technology	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
How did the VRS technology impact calls?	Mobile device was choppy, made it difficult to see	The interpreter informed Deaf and hearing client of the technological issues.

### DON'T:

VRS Technology	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
How did the VRS technology impact calls?	A woman called to make a doctor's appointment, but she was calling on a mobile device, so the interpreter couldn't see her very well.	The interpreter was frustrated and informed Deaf and hearing client of the technological issues.

Community vs. VRS	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
What aspects of VRS interpreting did you notice that are different from community interpreting?		
Telephone Systems	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
What type of IVR systems did you observe? What strategies did you see VIs use to mediate them?		
VRS Technology	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
How did the VRS technology impact calls?		
How did VIs handle the VRS technology?		

<b>Call Types</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>What world knowledge or previous experience do you think were beneficial to the VIs you observed?</p> <p>Did you see any emotional or otherwise difficult calls? If so, what strategies did you see the VI use to cope?</p> <p>What registers did you see (intimate, consultative, etc.)</p> <p>Did you witness any calls from/to mobile callers (Deaf or hearing)? What were the challenges?</p>		
<b>Callers</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>Did you see any calls from children? How were these different than calls from adults?</p> <p>Did you see any calls from older Deaf adults? How were these different than calls from adults?</p> <p>Did you see any calls from people of color? Did they seem difficult or easy to manage?</p> <p>Did you see callers use signs with which you were not familiar?</p> <p>Did you see the need for cultural mediation between a Deaf and a hearing caller? If so, what cultural mediation strategies were used?</p>		
<b>Call Management</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>How were calls answered?</p> <p>How did VIs identify themselves when placing a call?</p> <p>Did you see effect and emotions communicated?</p> <p>Did you see background noise or multiple interactions relayed to callers?</p>		

<p>Did you see VIs clarifying information? Verifying information?</p> <p>Were the goals of the callers met easily?</p> <p>Did it seem that the callers had adequate control of their calls? Too much? Not enough?</p> <p>What did VIs do to make calls look and sound natural?</p> <p>What did you see VIs do to handle misunderstandings between callers?</p> <p>How do VIs manage turn taking?</p>		
<b>Customer Service</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>What techniques did you see that promoted good customer service (polite, courteous manner, etc.)?</p> <p>How did VIs interact with callers?</p>		
<b>Teaming</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>How did interpreter team support differ in the VRS setting from teaming you may have seen in a community setting?</p> <p>What factors influenced the need for a team interpreter?</p>		
<b>Self-care</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>What strategies did you see VIs use to take care of themselves physically?</p> <p>What strategies did you see VIs use to take care of themselves emotionally or psychologically?</p>		

## VRS Observation Guide: SAMPLE

Use this guide to focus your observations of VRS calls. Remember: Do not record any information that is potentially identifying, as calls are confidential. FCC regulations prohibit disclosing any content of an interpreted conversation during a VRS call.

### DO:

VRS technology	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
How did the VRS technology impact calls?	Mobile device was choppy; made it difficult to see	The interpreter informed Deaf and hearing client of the technological issues.

### DON'T:

VRS technology	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
How did the VRS technology impact calls?	A woman called to make a doctor's appointment, but she was calling on a mobile device so the interpreter couldn't see her very well.	The interpreter was frustrated and informed Deaf and hearing client of the technological issues.

Community vs. VRS	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
What aspects of VRS interpreting did you notice that are different from community interpreting?	2D Environment Clients can't see each other.	Interpreter called for a team. Use of eye gaze to control turn taking. Interpreter used note-taking strategies to perform consecutive interpretations.
Telephone systems	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
What type of IVR systems did you observe? What strategies did you see VIs use to mediate them?	IVR system was fast.  Deaf person kept saying "Live person, live person."  The IVR system would time out before the interpreter would get a response from consumer.	Interpreter would look at caller and not look at keypad when keying in numbers.  Used the bump on the number 5 to find numbers.  Interpreter asked caller, "Want me to hit O?"
		Interpreter would write notes or type out the account number.  Interpreter would hit the numbers SLOWLY to avoid the system timing out.

<b>VRS technology</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
How did the VRS technology impact calls?	Mobile device was choppy; made it difficult to see.	Interpreter informed Deaf and hearing client of the technological issues.
How did VIs handle the VRS technology?	VI was flustered.	Interpreter would type back and forth with the caller to confirm accurate message.  Took a break and got coffee.
<b>Call types</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
What world knowledge or previous experiences do you think were beneficial to the VIs you observed?	Topic was regarding home mortgages.	VI owns home and has a mortgage. Has been through that process before.
Did you see any emotional or otherwise difficult calls? If so, what strategies did you see the VI use to cope?	VI disagreed with what the caller was choosing to do with this situation. It was child abuse related.	Debriefed with a colleague through instant messenger.
What registers did you see (intimate, consultative, etc.)?	Intimate	During intimate registers, VI would typically not explain VRS. VI would ask for the caller to fingerspell sign name or describe sign name to hearing caller. VI went with the conversation even though he did not fully understand what was being talked about. Both parties understood.
	Consultative	VI took notes of the “expert” consumer if the explanation was extremely important and difficult to understand. VI would use a more consecutive interpretation and open up his process to both parties, letting them know what was going on.
	Frozen	VI would control turn taking more and typically allow the “expert” first priority in the turn-taking process.
	Formal	Used words such as, “You have a patient on the line, or you have a customer on the line who wants to place an order” to avoid being hung up on by the hearing person.
Did you witness any calls from/to mobile callers (Deaf or hearing)? What were the challenges?	Informal/casual	

	<p>Caller was driving.  Caller was signing one-handed.  Caller was too close to the screen.  Connection was bad, and it was blurry.  It was too dark.  Phone was bouncing.</p> <p>Hearing mobile calls was difficult to sometimes.  The noise in the background was loud.  Sometimes there was an echo.</p>	<p>Recorded message of school closing.  Interpreter would take notes while the call was being placed and would summarize if caller picked up.</p> <p>Used more higher-register word choices: "How may I help you?"</p> <p>Asked caller what the topic of the conversation would be while placing the call.</p> <p>VI matched caller's body language.  VI made a lot of two-handed signs one-handed.  Used more informal words: "Where you at?", "What up?", "How's it going?"</p> <p>Explained to hearing person about the technical issues.  Informed Deaf caller that it was difficult to see, and he or she would try his or her best.  Asked the Deaf caller to place the phone down and use both hands.  Asked that Deaf caller move back further; it was tough to see.</p> <p>Informed Deaf and hearing consumer of the difficulties hearing. Would sim-com this.</p>
<b>Callers</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>Did you see any calls from children? How were these different than calls from adults?</p> <p>Did you see any calls from older Deaf adults? How were these different than calls from adults?</p> <p>Did you see any calls from people of color? Did they seem difficult or easy to manage?</p> <p>Did you see callers use signs with which you were not familiar?</p>	<p>Children seemed intimidated.  Children did not know how to use VRS well.</p> <p>Elderly Deaf were slower with their signs.  Elderly Deaf were not as savvy with the IVR prompts.</p> <p>Sometimes harder to see due to clothing or lighting.  Seemed difficult since VI is white.</p> <p>Yes, some the VI knew.  If VI didn't know signs that were regional or sign named.</p>	<p>VI smiled.  VI would use more expansions and take his or her time explaining concepts more.</p> <p>VI had to <i>slow down</i>.  VI needed to use more time-expanding things.  VI would ask, "Do you want to speak to a representative?"</p> <p>VI would use closure skills to complete sentences.  VI asked for a light to be turned on.  VI used language such as, "What up?", "Where you at?", "Where mah money?" to match the caller's affect and tone.</p>

<p>Did you see the need for cultural mediation between Deaf and hearing callers? If so, what cultural mediation strategies were used?</p>	<p>Hearing caller would be confused about what VRS is.</p> <p>Deaf caller would not understand that going straight to voice mail may mean phone is off or the person is on the other line.</p> <p>Deaf would go into a huge explanation of why he or she can't come in to work, stating they are vomiting, bleeding, have diarrhea.</p> <p>Deaf person answers and says, "Who, who, who, who you?"</p>	<p>VI would repeat the sign and ask. If Deaf would not answer, he or she would explain it to the hearing consumer or use closure skills to figure it out. Sometimes it was omitted.</p> <p>VI explained, "This is an interpreted phone call; the person you are speaking with uses sign language to communicate, and I am here to interpret the phone call. The person is using a video phone device similar to Skype, so I can see them, and they can see me.</p> <p>VI explained.</p> <p>VI would say, "I am not feeling well today. I am having stomach issues, and can't make it into work today."</p> <p>VI says, "Who is calling?"</p>
<p><b>Call management</b></p>	<p><b>Demands on the VI</b></p>	<p><b>Controls used by the VI</b></p>
<p>How were calls answered?</p> <p>How did VIs identify themselves when placing a call?</p> <p>Did you see affect and emotions communicated?</p> <p>Did you see background noise or multiple interactions relayed to callers?</p>	<p>Caller was angry.</p> <p>Caller was clearly upset.</p> <p>Kids climbing on parents. Dog and cat in the back. TV is on.</p> <p>Deaf was relaying information from a person off screen.</p> <p>Hearing person was outside with the wind.</p>	<p>VI smiled and said, "Good morning."</p> <p>If Deaf, they would smile and say, "Ready to call?"</p> <p>If hearing, he or she would say, "Hello. This is an interpreted phone call; I am going to connect you," if he or she believed the callers have interacted before. If VI believed they hadn't, then he or she would say, "Hello. This is an interpreted phone call; you have a person on the line that is using sign language to communicate, and I'm here to interpret between the two of you ... and your caller is saying ..."</p> <p>VI would sim-com this, but be ahead in ASL so that there no pauses after that statement, and it was more streamlined.</p> <p>VI used vocal intonation and raised his or her voice.</p> <p>VI changed his or her voice to match the tone of the signs.</p> <p>Was open to both parties about the background noise.</p>

<b>Call management, cont.</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>Did you see VIs clarifying information? Verifying information?</p> <p>Were the goals of the callers met easily?</p> <p>Did it seem that the callers had adequate control of their calls? Too much? Not enough?</p> <p>What did VIs do to make calls look and sound natural?</p> <p>What did you see VIs do to handle misunderstandings between callers?</p> <p>How do VIs manage turn taking?</p>	<p>VI did not understand hearing caller's point.</p> <p>Sometimes goals were met, and sometimes not.</p> <p>Pacing/turn taking</p>	<p>VI asked specifically for hearing person to expand.</p> <p>VI may ask, "What is it you want to get through to the caller?"</p> <p>VI ensured minimal silence. For example, okay when hearing caller would say, "What is your name, date of birth, and address?" VI would ask one question at a time and elicit the next question while voicing the answer to the previous one almost at the same time.</p> <p>If the misunderstanding was due to the VI's interpretation, VI would clarify and make sure he or she understood.</p> <p>Used minimal silence.</p> <p>Used fillers, "Ummm, let me look here, hold on a second."</p> <p>Pointed to the headset and nodded head showing he or she was processing.</p> <p>Asked caller to wait one moment, trying to fully understand the message before interpreting.</p>
<b>Customer service</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>What techniques did you see that promoted good customer service (polite, courteous manner, etc.)?</p> <p>How did VIs interact with callers?</p>		<p>Caller would smile.</p> <p>Ask if they wanted to make another call.</p> <p>Apologized.</p> <p>Said, "Good morning."</p> <p>Said, Thank you; have a good day."</p> <p>Said, "Hope you feel better."</p>
<b>Teaming</b>	<b>Demands on the VI</b>	<b>Controls used by the VI</b>
<p>How did interpreter team support differ in the VRS setting from teaming you may have seen in a community setting?</p> <p>What factors influenced the need for a team interpreter?</p>	<p>Requesting team couldn't explain their needs.</p> <p>VI couldn't understand the caller.</p> <p>Caller had CP.</p> <p>Conference call.</p> <p>911 call.</p> <p>VI couldn't see well.</p> <p>Call was very sensitive and needed a second eye.</p>	<p>Use notepad on the computer to type out briefly his or her needs.</p>

Self-care	Demands on the VI	Controls used by the VI
<p>What strategies did you see VIs use to take care of themselves physically?</p> <p>What strategies did you see VIs use to take care of themselves emotionally or psychologically?</p>		<p>Drank water the whole shift.</p> <p>Had chair upright.</p> <p>Got up every break and walked.</p> <p>Sat in the massage chair one break.</p> <p>Made sure to eat every two hours.</p> <p>Spoke with other VIs about the situation.</p>

# LESSON 6

## Call/Caller Diversity and Ethical Decision Making

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**Topics of discussion:** Types of calls and potential callers VIs may encounter and ethical decision making in the VRS environment

### Course Goals

5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK class discussion questions
2. Slide show: “Lesson 6: Call/Caller Diversity”
3. Slide show: “Lesson 6: Decision Making Through a DC-S Lens in VRS”
4. VRS pharmacy example (YouTube link)
5. VRS vignettes #7 and #15
6. “Ethical Decision Making” Assignment and Rubric (found at the end of this lesson plan)

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. explain the variety of call types they may encounter when working as an interpreter in the VRS setting,
2. discuss various approaches to interpreting when encountering challenging customers and call topics,
3. demonstrate an understanding of turn taking in the VRS setting, and
4. describe strategies that can be used to facilitate turn taking in the VRS setting.

## Student Preparation

### Reading:

- Lightfoot, M. H. (2007). “Interpreting culturally sensitive information in VRS settings.” *VIEWS*, June, 1 and 17. Retrieved from [http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607\\_cultural\\_diversity1.pdf](http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0607_cultural_diversity1.pdf).

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #5: Class discussion.
  - Based on your VRS observations,
    1. Share a few demands that the VRS interpreters faced.
    2. Describe what controls they used to mitigate those demands.
    3. Explain whether you agreed or disagreed with their strategy and why.
2. Studyguide check-in—Follow up with students; last chance to answer any questions before the midterm.
3. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show: “Lesson 6: Call/Caller Diversity.”
4. Provide a second lecture and discussion based on the slide show: “Lesson 6: Decision Making through a DC-S Lens in VRS.”
5. Lesson activities:
  - Use pharmacy call example to discuss decision making through a DC-S lens:
  - VRS pharmacy call: <https://youtu.be/a46Sgs4B2Lk>.
  - VRS vignette practice.
  - Practice interpreting and then debrief as a class.
    - VRS vignette #7: <https://vimeo.com/162111087>
    - VRS vignette #15: <https://vimeo.com/164343532>  
Password: VRSCurriculum

## Lesson Content

### **Slide show: “Lesson 6: Call/Caller Diversity”—Notes**

#### Role of world knowledge/schema in VRS interpreting

The cultural diversity among interpreting consumers requires interpreters to be open to constructing new schemata so they may interpret effectively for people of various perspectives. This is never truer than in the realm of video relay interpreting (RID: VRS Standard Practice Paper, 2007). The VRS environment does not allow for developing an in-depth communal common ground before most VRS calls begin. (Call genre and participants’ names and location are often the only possible initial information a VRS interpreter has with which to activate schema.)

Marty Taylor's 1995 VRS Task Analysis specifically addresses the needs of interpreters in the VRS environment and outlines the need for diverse schemata. Her 2008 follow-up study (awaiting publication) supports the contention that VRS interpreters often infer and "read between the lines" on many calls and need to routinely construct schemata on areas of deficit in order to interpret for more consumers more effectively. "Having socio-cultural knowledge and experience with everyday American culture was reported as very helpful in interpreting accurately. Having a sense of 'knowing how things are done in the world' made interpreters feel capable of handling a variety of contexts and callers" (Taylor, 1995, 18).

These findings were supported in studies of interpreting in college environments (Napier, 2003) and in VRS environments (Hollrah et al, 2008).

Effective interpreting requires the ability to convey the meaning and intent of both parties. This ability requires the interpreter to not only fully comprehend and envision the message as the source messenger intends, but also to transmit this same intention to the target audience. Interpreters who have strong and diverse schemata at their disposal are able to better interpret for more people in more settings and can therefore satisfy the needs of more consumers. VRS interpreters can focus on the construction of new schema and the strengthening of established schema as significant types of preparation in the video relay interpreting environment in order to achieve optimal message equivalence.

#### **References:**

Carrell, P. L. (1983). "Some Issues in Studying the Role of Schemata or Background Knowledge in Second Language Comprehension." Paper delivered at 1983 TESOL Conference: Toronto, Canada. Retrieved November 1, 2008 from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/RFL/PastIssues/rfl12carrell.pdf>.

Clark, H. H. (1994). "Discourse in production." In M. A. Gernsbacher (ed.), *Handbook of Psycholinguistics*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Dean, R., and R. Pollard. (2001). "Application of demand control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training." *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 6: 1–14.

Dean, R. K. and R. Q. Pollard. (2013). *The Demand Control Schema: Interpreting as a practice profession*. North Charleston, SC: Create Space.

Demers, H. (2005). "The Working Interpreter." In T. Janzen (ed.), *Topics in Sign Language Interpreting*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Eysenck, M and M. Keane. (2000). *Cognitive psychology: a student's handbook*. New York: Psychology Press.

Hollrah, B., L. Johnson, R. Laurion, and J. Simon. "A Collaborative Approach to Effective Practice Research on VRS Interpreting." Paper delivered at 2008 Conference of Interpreter Trainers, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 24 October 2008.

- Humphrey, J., and B. Alcorn. (2001). *So you want to be an interpreter?* Texas: H&H Publishers.
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- Lightfoot, M. "Interpreting Culturally Sensitive Content in VRS Settings: Teaching Techniques." Paper delivered at 2008 Conference of Interpreter Trainers, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 24 October 2008.
- Mindess, A. (2006). *Reading between the Signs*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Intercultural Press.
- Napier, J. (2003). "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Occurrence and Types of Omissions Production by Australian Sign Language and English Interpreters." In M. Metzger, S. Collins, V. Dively, and R. Shaw (ed), *From Topic Boundaries to Omission: New Research on Interpretation*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
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- Tannen, D. (1993). *Framing in Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- Taylor, M. "Video Relay Industry Research: What Do Deaf and Hard of Hearing Callers, Interpreters and Managers Report?" Paper delivered at 2008 Conference of Interpreter Trainers, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 23 October 2008.
- Wilcox, S, and P. Wilcox. (1985) "Schema Theory and Language Interpretation." *Journal of Interpretation* 2: 84–93.
- Witter-Merithew, A. "Content Mapping: A Text Analysis and Mnemonic Tool for Interpreters." University of Northern Colorado DO IT Center, Colorado. Available at [http://www.unco.edu/doit/resources/Publication\\_PDFs/Content%20Mapping.pdf](http://www.unco.edu/doit/resources/Publication_PDFs/Content%20Mapping.pdf).

**Slide show: "Lesson 6: Decision Making Through a DC-S Lens in VRS"—Notes**

**Demand Constellations** are made up of two parts, the main demand and concurrent demand.

**Main Demands** usually constitute “what happened” or “what was said” of an interpreting situation. They are the central focus of “it depends” questions because they require that the interpreter respond (employ controls) even if that response is to do nothing.

**Concurrent Demands** can be environmental, interpersonal, paralinguistic, or intrapersonal demands and reflect the factors that are happening at the same time as the main demand.

### References:

Dean, R. K., and R. Q. Pollard. (2013). *The demand control schema: Interpreting as a practice profession*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace.

- Further information on the demand control schema can be found in *The Demand Control Schema: Interpreting As a Practice Profession*. Dean and Pollard, 2013. Available at: <http://demandcontrolscheme.com>.

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Homework: Ethical decision-making

- Respond to each of the scenarios found in the Ethical Decision Making in VRS assignment (located at the end of this lesson). Each is worth ten points and will be graded on completeness of answer and referencing CPC or FCC regulations. Students will type their answers on a separate page and be sure to:
  1. **Identify the conflict** (what is the problem, who is affected, how is the interpreter involved or not involved).
  2. **State what appropriate action(s) the VRS should take and why** (Hint: sometimes the correct action is no action).
  3. **Support answers from either FCC regulations and/or the RID Code of Professional Conduct.**

Due with Lesson 10

### Activities (not required):

- **Journal Entry #1:** The introduction to exploring world knowledge should be short and vague, such as: “Some topics are easy for us because of familiarity; others are harder for us to discuss. We aren’t going to discuss your answers now but will during the course of the class, so for now, just take out a piece of paper and take a few minutes to write your first instincts to the following question—and this will *not* be collected ...”
- **Journal Entry #2:** What topics or ideas would you feel comfortable chatting about with a person you just met? What topics would you steer clear of with a new person?

*This journal topic is designed to have the students consider conversational topics. The students will discover how people often speak on topics other than the purpose of the meeting. As an interpreter, one does a more competent job interpreting if one can speak on a multitude of topics that may not be within the interpreter's normal daily activity.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Ethical Decision-Making in VRS**

**50 points**

**Directions:** Respond to each of the scenarios below. Each is worth 10 points and will be graded on completeness of answer and referencing CPC or FCC regulations. Type your answers on a separate page and be sure to:

1. **Identify the conflict** (*what is the problem, who is affected, how is the interpreter involved or not involved*)
2. **State what appropriate action(s) the VRS interpreter could take and why** (*Hint: sometimes the correct action is no action*)
3. **Support answers from either FCC regulations and/or the RID Code of Professional Conduct**

### **Scenarios:**

1. A Deaf caller uses VRS to call her mother and complain about her abusive boyfriend. She complains that he often yells at her and just recently he has become physically abusive, even threatening her with a knife one time. The hearing mother seems to be apathetic and just tells her daughter she is overreacting. She then says she has to hang up. The Deaf daughter is obviously distraught, and you feel this call was a cry for help. After hanging up with both callers, you still have access to the Deaf girl's phone number and city. You know you could easily find her local police station and report this to them.
2. On a VRS call, the call content suddenly starts to make you uncomfortable. The parties are discussing their romantic relationship in great detail. You are uncomfortable using the graphic signs and English vocabulary required to equate the SL to the TL.
3. After a particularly difficult VRS call you are left feeling emotionally drained. It is not time for your break, and you did not have a team for the call. However, you are feeling like you really need to dialogue about what you just observed and heard on the call before you can mentally be ready to interpret a new call.
4. The Deaf person on a VRS call to an insurance agency is trying to resolve a claim related to a recent traffic accident. As you are interpreting, it becomes evident to you that the Deaf person does not understand the terms the hearing person is using including "claim," "policy," "deductible," and "estimate." You feel that these terms need to be explained to the Deaf person, but you do not want to be accused of taking over the call or interjecting your own opinion.
5. You are interpreting for a young Deaf child who is calling home from her dorm at the state residential school for the Deaf. Their signing is difficult to understand. You realize that most of what they are saying is not really critical; it's just a chance to connect with Mom and Dad. The more you try to clarify what the child is actually saying, the more it feels like it is interrupting the flow of their conversation. You think you could just omit the parts you don't understand, and it will flow much more smoothly.

# LESSON 7

## Midterm and VRS Vignette Practice

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**Topics of discussion:** Midterm and VRS vignette practice

### Course Goals

- 1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
- 2.0 Explain the current FCC regulations and the impact of the FCC on video relay interpreting.
- 3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.
- 4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK—credit earned for taking midterm
2. Copies of “Midterm: Introduction to VRS Interpreting” (located at the end of this lesson)
3. VRS vignettes #3, #8, #9, and #17

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. formulate interpretations of a variety of call types that are common in VRS interpreting and
2. apply skills and strategies observed during VRS center observations to their own interpretations of VRS video vignettes.

### Student Preparation

#### Activities (not required):

- **Journal Entry #1:** The introduction to exploring world knowledge should be short and vague, such as: “Some topics are easy for us because of familiarity; others are harder for us to discuss. We aren’t going to

discuss your answers now but will during the course of the class, so for now, just take out a piece of paper and take a few minutes to write your first instincts to the following question—and this will *not* be collected ...”

- **Journal Entry #2:** What topics or ideas would you feel comfortable chatting about with a person you just met? What topics would you steer clear of with a new person?

*This journal topic is designed to have the students consider conversational topics. The students will discover how people often speak on topics other than the purpose of the meeting. As an interpreter, one does a more competent job interpreting if one can speak on a multitude of topics that may not be within the interpreter’s normal daily activity.*

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #6: Students receive credit for being in class on time and taking the midterm
2. Distribute midterm
3. Lesson activities:
  - VRS vignette practice  
Practice interpreting and then debrief as a class:
    - VRS vignette #3: <https://vimeo.com/162607833>
    - VRS vignette #8: <https://vimeo.com/162123224>
    - VRS vignette #9: <https://vimeo.com/161875287>
    - VRS vignette #17: <https://vimeo.com/162006597>  
Password: VRSCurriculum
4. Wrap-up discussion questions:
  - Which vignette was the most challenging for you? Why?
  - What controls can be used in the challenging scenarios you experienced?
  - What diversity did you see in the types of callers?
  - What controls do you wish you had had prior to calls?
5. Homework reminder:  
VRS Observation Reflection due next lesson.

## Lesson Extensions

Students may practice each vignette a second time, attempting to improve their original interpretation, followed by applying what they have learned from the first experience and class discussion afterward.

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Reading:

- Weisenberg, J. C. and E. Garcia. (2007). “From telephone to dial tone: A look at video interpreting.” *VIEWS*, June.

## Midterm: Introduction to VRS Interpreting

(Taylor 2005, RID VRS Interpreting Standard Practice Paper, FCC Regulations, class lectures)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The NCIEC has identified five competency domains of skills that VRS/VRI interpreters should possess. List each domain below, and provide an example of a skill within that domain (10 pts.):
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
2. When compared to VRS calls received in the evening, calls received during the day are more likely to be: (Circle all that apply) (3 pts.)
  - a. Directed by the specific agenda of one of the callers
  - b. More social in nature



e. VI

f. FCC

g. TTY

6. Describe at least three ways that VRS has impacted the work of interpreters. (5 pts)

7. List three ways that VRS interpreting is different from community interpreting (5 pts).

**Midterm: Introduction to VRS Interpreting—ANSWER KEY**  
(Taylor 2005, RID VRS Interpreting Standard Practice Paper, FCC Regulations, class lectures)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The NCIEC has identified five competency domains of skills that VRS/VRI interpreters should possess. List each domain below, and provide an example of a skill within that domain (10 pts.):
  - a. ***Theory and knowledge competencies: Examples will vary***
  - b. ***Human relations competencies: Examples will vary***
  - c. ***Language skills: Examples will vary***
  - d. ***Interpreting skills competencies: Examples will vary***
  - e. ***Professional competencies: Examples will vary***
  
2. When compared to VRS calls received in the evening, calls received during the day are more likely to be: (Circle all that apply) (3 pts.)
  - a. ***Directed by the specific agenda of one of the callers***
  - b. More social in nature
  - c. To family members
  - d. ***Goal-oriented***
  - e. All of the above
  
3. What is the FCC requirement for the physical location of Deaf and hearing participants when they are using VRS? (3 pts.)
  - a. ***Both callers must be in separate locations.***
  
4. Choose five of the FCC rules listed below and describe each rule: (10 pts.)
  - a. Speed of answer:
    - ***Speed of answer rule created to improve VRS service***
    - ***VRS providers must answer 80 percent of all VRS calls within 120 seconds***
    - ***SOA is measured as a monthly average (FCC originally wanted measurement daily)***
  
  - b. Interpreter proficiency:
    - ***FCC requires all VRS interpreters to be certified***

- **VRS companies can choose to require more than just certification**
  - **Screenings**
  - **Foreign language interpreting**
  - **English and Spanish**
- c. Waste, fraud and abuse
- **FCC has prohibited anything that promotes:**
    - ♦ **“false or unverified claims for TRS Fund compensation”**
    - ♦ **“unauthorized use of VRS”**
    - ♦ **“the making of VRS calls that would not otherwise be made”**
  - **Providers have a duty to report waste, fraud, or abuse to FCC.**
- d. Eligibility for VRS / signing up for VRS
- **Must be Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-blind, or speech disabled**
  - **Must need VRS to communicate with other people**
  - **Must be registered with default provider and (except for guest-user period) verified**
- e. Employee work / personal calls
- **Calls involving a VRS employee or subcontractor are not compensable on a per-minute basis from the iTRS Fund.**
  - **Employee personal calls at the workplace are not compensable.**
  - **But personal or nonbusiness-related VRS calls placed by employees outside the workplace are compensable.**
- f. Rule against encouraging use of VRS
- **FCC prohibits providers from encouraging users to make TRS calls that they would not otherwise make.**
  - **Examples of prohibited conduct:**
    - ♦ **Sending users e-mails on holidays encouraging them to call family members.**
    - ♦ **Asking users to place test calls during installations.**
  - **Unless those calls are marked as nonbillable.**
  - **Setting up phone-in training sessions or presentations that generate minutes.**
  - **Educating users re availability of VRS/features versus encouraging them to place more or longer calls.**
- g. Calls placed for generating minutes
- **FCC prohibits TRS providers from offering relay users “financial and similar incentives, directly or indirectly, to use their service” or “make TRS calls.”**
  - **Prohibit incentives based on usage.**
  - **Prohibit incentives to select particular provider.**
- h. Porting / slamming / letters of authorization
- **“Slamming” = unauthorized/unlawful change of default provider.**

- **Rules prohibit changing user's default provider without authorization.**
- **Separate authorization for each type of TRS service.**
- **Sixty-day rule.**
- **May not reduce level or quality of service while user is waiting to port out.**
- **Prohibition on marketing to user during port-out period.**

i. Service interruptions

- **VRS service must be provided 24/7.**
- **What is a service interruption?**
- **Rules don't define, but it is advisable to report any issue that affects any user's ability to use the service.**
- **Examples of service interruptions:**
  - ♦ **Server issues that prevent any user from making calls.**
  - ♦ **Network-connectivity issues that prevent users in certain region from making calls.**
  - ♦ **Network issues that impede certain type (e.g., hearing-to-Deaf) calls.**
- **Examples of events that are not "interruptions":**
  - ♦ **An equipment failure that does not affect users' ability to use the service because a redundant component immediately kicked in.**
  - ♦ **Failure of a user's videophone or the user's Internet connection.**
- **Unforeseen interruptions: Must report within two business days.**

5. For each acronym below, write what it stands for, and provide a brief definition: (14 pts.)

**VP: Videophone. The device used by sign language users that enables them to make video phone calls. Calls can be made directly to other VP users or to standard voice telephone users through VRS.**

**TRS: Telecommunication relay service. Required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Telecommunications relay service (TRS) allows people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired and people who use a standard voice telephone to communicate through a communications assistant (CA).**

**CA: Communications assistant. The individual who relays the input to the telephone user via spoken language and types that person's response back to the TTY user.**

**VRS: Video relay service. A free service for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community that enables anyone to conduct video relay calls through a video interpreter (VI) via a broadband Internet connection and a video relay service.**

**VI: Video interpreter. An interpreter that works in a VRS or VRI setting.**

**FCC: Federal Communications Commission. Regulates and oversees telecommunication relay service. Funds video relay services by reimbursing them for each minute that an interpreter is on a call.**

**TTY: Text telephone or telecommunications device for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people. TTYs have a keyboard and allow people to type their telephone conversations. The text is read on a display screen and/or a paper printout. A TTY user calls a TRS relay center and types the number of the person he or she wishes to call. The CA at the relay center then makes a voice telephone call to the other party to the call, and relays the call back and forth between the parties by speaking what a text user types, and typing what a voice telephone user speaks.**

6. Describe at least three ways that VRS has impacted the work of interpreters. (5 pts.)
  - a. *more than one viable job opportunity*
  - b. *can work specific hours*
  - c. *more diverse consumer base*
  - d. *many different interpreting topics*
  - e. *exposed to range of registers*
  - f. *personal and professional growth*
  
7. List three ways that VRS interpreting is different from community interpreting. (5 pts.)

Answers may contain three of the following differences:

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Video relay service interpreting</i>	<i>Community interpreting</i>
<i>Logistics</i>	<i>Interpreting phone calls of all types; the consumers and interpreter are all in separate locations</i>	<i>Interpreting meetings, appointments, classes, etc.; the interpreter is in the same location with all consumers</i>
<i>Type of interpreting environment</i>	<i>Call center cubicles; consistent environment</i>	<i>Varies depending on assignment</i>
<i>Control over accepting jobs</i>	<i>Little to no discretion; must stay in calls at least ten minutes unless an ethical conflict arises</i>	<i>Encouraged interpreter discretion</i>
<i>Professional development opportunities</i>	<i>Company usually provides professional development opportunities; increased opportunity to use ASL to English skills in interactive situations</i>	<i>Responsibilities often fall on interpreter</i>
<i>Working with peers</i>	<i>Call center environment; team interpreters always available</i>	<i>Often interpreter works in isolation or with one team interpreter; depends on the assignment, location, and employer</i>
<i>Job security</i>	<i>VRS services are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; individual call center hours vary</i>	<i>Varies depending on specific employer and assignments</i>
<i>Difficulty level of interpreting</i>	<i>Very difficult; little or no preparation time; interpreting experience required; team interpreter support available almost immediately</i>	<i>Moderately difficult; prep time is typical; appropriate for novice interpreters (with support); team interpreting is less common</i>
<i>Pay range</i>	<i>Competitive with national standards; paydays are typically very reliable</i>	<i>Competitive with local standards; paydays vary by the employer policies and invoicing process</i>
<i>Prerequisites /standard qualifications</i>	<i>Preferred: interpreting experience, certification, interpreter training</i>	<i>Varies by employer</i>
<i>Necessary travel</i>	<i>Work location is the same every day; depends on the call center location</i>	<i>Work location varies greatly by assignment</i>
<i>Supervision and evaluation</i>	<i>High amount of supervision, feedback, and support</i>	<i>Low amount of supervision, feedback, and support</i>
<i>Role delineation</i>	<i>Clear role boundaries are expected due to mandated “dial tone” status of the interpreter; changing with some companies</i>	<i>Varies by consumers and specific setting</i>
<i>Ethical considerations</i>	<i>Call content and consumers change constantly without interpreter discretion; interpreter must be highly aware of his or her strengths, weaknesses, and potential conflicts of interest in order to avoid unethical behavior</i>	<i>Interpreters have high degree of control over the types of settings and consumers with whom they work; some ethical conflicts may be avoided through applying critical thinking skills and responsible choices about accepting assignments</i>
<i>Typical topics</i>	<i>All topics permitted, including all genres and registers (intimate register calls are common)</i>	<i>Typically formal, consultative, and informal situations</i>

**Rubric:**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	All topics are addressed in detail, and all questions are answered thoughtfully.	All topics are addressed in detail, and most questions are answered but lack depth.	All topics are addressed but lack detail, and some questions are answered but lack depth.	One or more topics were not addressed. Observations lack depth.
<b>Application</b>	Information clearly relates to VRS interpreting. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to VRS interpreting. It provides one or two supporting details and/or examples.	Information lacks connection to VRS interpreting. No details or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with VRS interpreting.
<b>Conventions</b>			Formatting, punctuation, spelling, and grammar contain no errors.	Formatting, punctuation, spelling, and grammar contain multiple errors.

# LESSON 8

## IVR Systems and Automated Messages

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**Topics of discussion:** IVR systems, automated messages, and practice using VRS vignettes with IVR systems

### Course Goals

- 4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK journal response question
2. Slide show: “Lesson 8: IVR Systems and Automated Messages”
3. IVR Systems/Automated Messages Phone Numbers
4. IVR Systems Explained by Anthony Natale
5. VRS vignettes #2, #12, #14

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. identify various types of IVR systems and automated messages,
2. identify strategies used to interpret IVR systems and automated messages, and
3. practice and implement strategies for navigating VRS calls that include IVR systems.

### Student Preparation

#### Reading:

- Weisenberg, J. C. and E. Garcia. (2007). “From telephone to dial tone: A look at video interpreting.” *VIEWS*: June.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #7 Journal response:
  - When thinking about interpreting IVR systems, answer the following:
    - What do you predict will be the most challenging aspect?
    - What previous knowledge could help you navigate through an interpretation of IVR systems?
    - From your VRS observations, what strategies have you seen used when interpreting IVR systems?”
2. Collect homework: VRS Observation Reflection.
3. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show: “Lesson 8: IVR Systems and Automated Messages.”
4. Lesson activities:
  - Break students into pairs and have them practice interpreting the following IVR systems:
    - Social Security 1-(800) 772-1213
    - USCIS 1-(800) 375-5283
    - Dell 1-(800) 999-3355
    - Apple 1-(800) 275-2273
    - Time Warner Cable 1-(800) 892-4357
    - DirectTV 1-(800) 531-5000
    - Local doctor’s office to ask if they are accepting new patients
    - Local restaurant to ask for specials
    - Local business (Target or grocery store) to ask for directions

*\*This is not an exhaustive list of IVR practice options. You may research and find other resources for practice available online or through other platforms.*

- Watch as a class and discuss—Anthony Natale explains IVR systems: <https://www.facebook.com/SorensonVRS/videos/10154670382333636/>
- Practice interpreting IVR systems and then debrief as a class using DC-S as the framework:
  1. VRS vignette #2: <https://vimeo.com/162610614>
  2. VRS vignette #12: <https://vimeo.com/161877898>
  3. VRS vignette #14: <https://vimeo.com/162006598>  
Password: VRSCurriculum
- Supplemental practice if needed:
  - <http://www.onholdadvertising.net/samples>
  - <http://www.evolvedsound.com.au/evolved-demos/ivr-demos>

## Lesson Content

Lesson content on IVR systems can be found at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive\\_voice\\_response](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive_voice_response)

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/diagram/ivr-system-cost>.

See supplemental lesson content document on interactive voice response (IVR) systems on curriculum website: ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)).

## **Next Lesson Preparation**

### **Homework: Panel questions**

Ask students to prepare three to five questions based on the reading assignment. These questions will be used during the panel: VRS Interpreter's Perspective on VRS.

Due with Lesson 9.

### **Reading:**

- Alley, E. (2013). "Video relay service: The path from student to professional?" *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 5, no. 2: 96–110.

# LESSON 9

## VRS Interpreters' Perspectives on VRS

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**Topics of discussion:** VRS interpreters' perspectives on VRS, the various demands of a job in VRS, and strategies for self-care

### Course Goals

- 3.0 Distinguish video relay interpreting from community interpreting.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 7.0 Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK—Student panel questions
2. Contact and confirm VRS interpreters for panel
3. Questions for panelists

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. explain how the diverse range of VRS consumers can create demands for VRS interpreters,
2. discuss varying call types (including register) that VRS interpreters may encounter,
3. identify how interpreters use cultural mediation to navigate through VRS calls,
4. discuss the potential control options interpreters use in order to meet the demands of various call and caller types,
5. discuss a variety of customer service approaches that can create positive experiences for Deaf VRS consumers, and
6. describe stress and burnout and potential strategies to help alleviate them.

## Student Preparation

### Homework: Panel questions

- Ask students to prepare three to five questions based on the reading assignment. These questions will be used during the panel: VRS Interpreter's Perspective on VRS.
  - Due with Lesson 9

### Reading:

- Alley, E. (2013). "Video relay service: The path from student to professional?" *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 5, no. 2: 96–110.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #8: Students will receive credit for bringing three to five questions to class. Instructor should verify with each student that they brought these questions to class.
  - Alternate SWYK #8: If students are struggling with creating panel questions, use the first ten minutes of class as a brainstorm session. Divide students into pairs or small groups to discuss question ideas, and then create a final question list to be used during the panel.
2. Lesson Activity: Panel: VRS Interpreters' Perspective on VRS

*Instructor note: A panel of VRS interpreters will be invited to class. If possible, when selecting panelists, choose individuals from varying VRS companies, length of employment, and differing background. The panel should be coordinated in a way that exhibits neutrality and respect for all interpreter consumers and VRS employers.*

- Instructor will welcome the panelists and facilitate the opening questions (introductions/ice-breaker/getting to know you questions). Afterward, students will contribute by asking the panelists questions from their list, prepared prior to class or during the brainstorming session. Instructor should moderate when necessary but allow the panel to be student-led. The panel should use the remainder of class time.

Other questions for panelists, if time permits:

1. What led you to pursue working as a VRS interpreter?
2. What are some of your environmental challenges as a VRS interpreter?
3. Describe what you love about working in the VRS environment.
4. Have you ever experienced burnout?
5. What does it feel like?
6. What are some strategies you use to reduce burnout?

7. What would be one piece of advice you would give to someone interested in working in the VRS environment?
8. Have you ever experienced interpreting a VRS call where the call content made you feel uncomfortable?
9. How does cultural mediation come into play in VRS?
10. Without describing call content, give us an example of a challenging call.
11. What does the teaming experience look like in VRS?
12. Describe a successful teaming experience.
13. Describe an unsuccessful teaming experience.
14. Do you ever feel isolated while working in VRS? What are some strategies that you use to minimize those feelings of isolation?
15. Describe some of your favorite moments as a VRS interpreter.

## Lesson Content

Forming a panel: For instructors who may not work in VRS or do not have access to VRS interpreters, see the following suggestions:

- Contact your local/regional VRS center and speak with the center manager/director.
- Contact your college/university interpreting department and speak with the interpreter coordinator.
- Check your state’s interpreting association website for interpreter contact info; send out an e-mail request to local interpreters.

### Panel alternatives:

- If an in-person panel is not feasible, consider hosting a virtual panel through an online platform, such as Google Hangouts or Zoom.
- If finding multiple panelists is not feasible, consider hosting a virtual visit with one video interpreter (VI) through an online platform, such as Google Hangouts or Zoom.
- If hosting a panel is not feasible, consider a replacement assignment, such as a phone/in-person interview with a VI.

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Readings:

- Hoza, J. (2010). *Team Interpreting: As Collaboration and Interdependence*. Alexandria, VA: RID Press. Chapter 1: “Team Interpreting: Defining What We Do,” 1–22. Chapter 3: Effective Interpreting Teams, 35–52.

*Instructor Note: An overview of these pages is provided for both the instructor and students. See supplemental lesson content document on team interpreting on curriculum website: ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)).*

- Rainey, S. L. (2013). "Current teaming practices in video relay service." Master's of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 6. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/6/>.
  - Students read: Introduction, Conclusions and Findings.
  
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). "Team interpreting." Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>  
Homework due: "Ethical Decision Making."

# LESSON 10

## Team Interpreting in VRS

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**Topics of discussion:** Team interpreting in the VRS environment; the history and evolution of team interpreting

### Course Goals

- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK Mine Field Game
  - Mine field obstacles
2. Slide show: “Lesson 10: Team Interpreting in VRS”
3. Team Interpreting Handout (found at the end of this lesson plan)
4. VRS vignettes #4, #5, #11, #13, #16
5. Self-Care Presentation Instructions

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. explain the role and function of team interpreting in VRS settings,
2. discuss the characteristics of an effective interpreting team,
3. discuss further how these characteristics impact the teaming experience in a VRS environment,
4. describe the typical procedures used when team interpreting a VRS call,
5. identify what situations may cause VRS interpreters to request a team interpreter,
6. discuss the potential control options interpreters use in order to meet the demands of various call and caller types while working with a team interpreter,
7. explain the purpose of requesting and working with a team interpreter to interpret a VRS call, and
8. discuss the impacts of team interpreting to both VRS providers and VRS users.

## Student Preparation

### Readings:

- Hoza, J. (2010). *Team Interpreting: As Collaboration and Interdependence*. Alexandria, VA: RID Press.
  - Chapter 1: “Team Interpreting: Defining What We Do,” 1–22.
  - Chapter 3: “Effective Interpreting Teams,” 35–52

*Instructor Note: An overview of these pages is provided for both the instructor and students. See supplemental lesson content document on team interpreting on curriculum website: ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)).*

- Rainey, S. L. (2013). “Current teaming practices in video relay service.” Master’s of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 6. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/6/>.
  - Students read: “Introduction, Conclusions and Findings.”
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). “Team interpreting.” Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #9: Mine field game  
Set up a “mine field” using chairs, balls, cones, boxes, or any other object that could potentially be an obstacle. Leave enough space between the objects for someone to walk through. Set up the classroom before students arrive for class. Before students enter the classroom, divide students up into pairs. Blindfold one person in each pair. The person blindfolded is not allowed to talk while going through the exercise. Ask his or her partner to only give verbal directions; no touching the blindfolded person either. The goal is to help your blindfolded partner reach the other side of the room without hitting any of the obstacles. If the blindfolded person hits an obstacle, he or she must start again. Before beginning, give each partnership three minutes to discuss how they will communicate with each other.
2. Follow-up questions/class discussion:
  - How much did you trust your partner at the start?
  - How much did you trust your partner at the end?
  - What is the difference between going alone and being guided by another?
  - What ingredients are needed when trusting and working with someone else?
  - What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure?
  - What could your partner have done to help make you feel more safe/secure?
  - What communication strategies worked best?
  - What communication strategies did not work?
3. Collect homework: “Ethical Decision Making”

4. Provide a lecture and discussion of team interpreting in VRS based on the slide show: “Lesson 10: Team Interpreting in VRS.”
5. Lesson activity:
  - VRS vignette practice
    - Practice interpreting and then debrief as a class:  
VRS vignette #4: <https://vimeo.com/162609977>  
VRS vignette #5: <https://vimeo.com/164148998>  
VRS vignette #11: <https://vimeo.com/161876832>  
VRS vignette #13: <https://vimeo.com/162006599>  
VRS vignette #16: <https://vimeo.com/161880305>  
Password: VRSCurriculum
    - Place students in interpreting teams. Instruct the students to spend five minutes meeting with their team to discuss their strategies for effectively interpreting the VRS call as a team (strategies taken from the lecture and class discussion). Teams will then interpret the mock VRS call. After the call has been completed, ask the teams to spend five minutes discussing their experience as a team member in the collaborative and interdependent process. Repeat this process so the other interpreter can interpret the call. Afterward, invite the interpreting teams to share their experience of working together with the whole class.
    - Wrap-up discussion—Instructor may share some of his or her experiences as an interpreting team member both in and out of VRS. Discuss how VRS teaming may differ from other interpreting venues. Tie in these stories to the topics discussed during class.

Introduce the Self-Care Presentation (found at the end of this lesson plan): Assign groups and corresponding videos to allow students time to begin researching a specific area of self-care, which will be presented at the end of the semester. For more information about the Self-Care Presentations, please see: “Lesson Plan 15: Self-Care for ASL/English Interpreters.”

## **Lesson Content**

Lesson content on team interpreting retrieved from: Hoza, J. (2010). “Team interpreting as collaboration and interdependence.” Alexandria, VA: RID Press.

See supplemental lesson content document on team interpreting on curriculum website: ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)).

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Readings:

- Holcombe, K. C. (2014). "Video relay service interpreting: Interpreters' authority, agency, and autonomy in the process of ethical decision-making." Master's of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 16. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/16>.
- Zimmer, J. (1989). "ASL/English interpreting in an interactive setting." In *Proceedings of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the American Translators Association*, edited by D. Hammond. Medford, NJ: Learned Information, 225–31.

### Other recommended readings:

- Metzger, M. (2005). "Interpreted discourse: Learning and recognizing what interpreters do in interaction." In Roy, C. B. (ed.), *Advances in Teaching Sign Language Interpreters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 101-22.
- Roy, C. B. (1993). "A sociolinguistic analysis of the interpreter's role in simultaneous talk in interpreted interaction." *Multilingua* 12, no. 4: 341–63.
- Warnicke, C., and C. Plejert. (2012). "Turn-organisation in mediated phone interaction using video relay service (VRS)." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1313–34.

### Activities:

*\*Instructor note: Select any of the following activities to assign to students in preparation for the upcoming lesson:*

- Interview American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters who have worked in a video relay service (VRS) or video remote interpreting (VRI) call center or setting. Ask them the following:
  - What type of calls do they prefer? Why? Remind the interpreter about confidentiality and not to share identifying elements of any calls, nor any call content.
  - What types of calls do they consider challenging? Why?
  - How do they manage the challenging calls?
- During the week, observe your customer service experiences.
  - Notice what elements of customer service stand out to you as quality, excellent, or outstanding. Compare it to elements you notice are good, average, below average, or poor.
    - Characterize these elements as you have done.
    - Write down these elements observed, explaining what happened. Tell why these elements stuck out to you.

- Be on the lookout for excellent or outstanding customer service. When experienced, ask to see the manager in order to compliment the employee or ask how you can give positive feedback for the employee.
  - Write about what happened.
- Describe in detail a quality customer service experience with a call center. Then, describe a negative experience with a call center.
    - What elements were similar in these call experiences?
    - What could/should have been done better by the operator processing your call?
  - Find a phone tree to call and list the given options.
    - Write which company or government agency was called.
    - What are the possible, or anticipated, difficulties for rendering an effective interpretation?
    - What are the elements of that phone tree that provide the potential for ease of interpretation and ability for you as the customer to get the desired outcomes?
    - How does this experience impact you when navigating through the phone tree during an interpreted VRS call?

# **Self-Care Presentations**

## **150 points**

### **Explanation:**

When working in the video relay service industry, interpreters often need to take a personal inventory of their mental, physical, emotional, psychological, and even spiritual welfare. Each of these are examples of self-care, necessary for the longevity and agility of an interpreter's career.

Students will investigate an approach to self-care and present their findings in class.

### **Requirements:**

- Watch the "Intro to Self-Care" and "Health Literacy" videos
  - Be prepared to take notes on these videos. Your notes will be turned in on the day of your presentation.
- Choose one of the following topics to investigate and share with the class:
  - Biomechanics
  - Physical activity
  - Posture
- Watch the corresponding video of your topic
- Find two additional resources to support your topic

### **Presentation Requirements:**

- Visual aid(s) required
  - Four to six PowerPoint slides/handout/poster board
  - One slide/segment of the presentation must summarize the "Intro to Self-Care" and "Health Literacy" videos
- Include references in your presentation
- Ten to twelve minutes
- Present in ASL
- No written paper required

## Self-Care Presentations Rubric:

Category	Criteria	Total points	Score
<b>Organization (15 points)</b>	The presentation has clear objectives	5	
	Information is presented in a logical sequence	5	
	Presentation appropriately cites requisite number of references	5	
<b>Content (45 points)</b>	Introduction is attention-getting, lays out the self-care topic well, and establishes a framework for the rest of the presentation (summary of the intro videos that lead into the main content of the presentation)	5	
	Technical terms are well-defined and clearly described in ASL	5	
	Presentation contains accurate information	10	
	Material included is relevant to the overall message/purpose	10	
	Appropriate amount of material is prepared, and points made reflect their relative importance	10	
	There is an obvious conclusion summarizing the presentation	5	
<b>Presentation (40 points)</b>	Student maintains good eye contact with the audience and is appropriately animated (e.g., gestures, moving around, etc.)	5	
	Student signs clearly and uses appropriate signing space	5	
	Delivery is poised, controlled, and smooth	5	
	Appropriate language choices are made to articulate concepts	5	
	Visual aids are well prepared, informative, effective, and not distracting	5	
	Length of presentation is within the assigned time limits	5	
	Information was well communicated	10	
<b>Application (20 points)</b>	Application to the material being studied in this class, other ITP classes, and student's potential work as a VRS interpreter	10	
	Student provided an in-depth commentary of his/her self-care topic and its pertinence to his/her career as an interpreter (ex. How will this knowledge impact his/her current habits?)	10	
<b>Overall impression (30 points)</b>	Presentation is very interesting, student is pleasant, and information is communicated clearly.	30	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Total points</b>	<b>150</b>	

# LESSON 11

## Customer Service and Call Management

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**Topic of discussion:** Customer service and call management strategies used within the VRS setting

### Course Goals

- 4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

- 1. Slide show: “Lesson 11: Customer Service”
- 2. Slide show: “Lesson 11: Call Management Strategies”  
Slide show supplemental materials:
  - “Lesson 11: Customer Service—Instructor’s Guide”
  - “Lesson 11: Customer Service—Student Manual and Workbook”
- 3. Live Interpretation Rubric (found at the end of this lesson plan)
- 4. Live Interpretation Scenarios
- 5. Recording equipment for student interpretations
- 6. “Self-Evaluation #1” assignment and rubric (found at the end of this lesson plan)

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1. define customer service,
- 2. describe good and bad customer service,
- 3. identify challenges relating to call management,
- 4. identify strategies to meet the challenges of call management and turn taking, and
- 5. practice and implement customer service and call management strategies during mock VRS calls.

## Student Preparation

### Readings:

- Holcombe, K. C. (2014). "Video relay service interpreting: Interpreters' authority, agency, and autonomy in the process of ethical decision-making." Master's of arts in interpreting studies (MAIS) theses. Paper 16. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/theses/16>.
- Zimmer, J. (1989). "ASL/English interpreting in an interactive setting." In *Proceedings of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the American Translators Association*, edited by D. Hammond. Medford, NJ: Learned Information: 225–31.

### Other recommended readings:

- Metzger, M. (2005). "Interpreted discourse: Learning and recognizing what interpreters do in interaction." In Roy, C. B. (ed.), *Advances in Teaching Sign Language Interpreter*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 101–22.
- Roy, C. B. (1993). "A sociolinguistic analysis of the interpreter's role in simultaneous talk in interpreted interaction." *Multilingua* 12, no. 4: 341–63.
- Warnicke, C., and C. Plejert. (2012). "Turn-organisation in mediated phone interaction using video relay service (VRS)." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1313–34.

### Activities:

*\*Instructor note: select any of the following activities to assign to students in preparation for the upcoming lesson.*

- Interview American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters who have worked in a video relay service (VRS) or video remote interpreting (VRI) call center or setting. Ask them the following:
  - What type of calls do they prefer? Why? Remind the interpreters about confidentiality and not to share identifying elements of any calls, nor any call content.
  - What types of calls do they consider challenging? Why?
  - How do they manage the challenging calls?

- During the week, observe your customer service experiences. Notice what elements of customer service stand out to you as quality, excellent, or outstanding. Compare it to elements you notice are good, average, below average or poor.
  - Characterize these elements as you have done.
  - Write down these elements observed explaining what happened. Tell why these elements stuck out to you.
  - Be on the lookout for excellent or outstanding customer service. When experienced, ask to see the manager in order to compliment the employee or ask how you can give positive feedback for the employee.
  - Write about what happened.
  
- Describe in detail a quality customer service experience with a call center. Then describe a negative experience with a call center.
  - What elements were similar in these call experiences?
  - What could/should have been done better by the operator processing your call?
  
- Find a phone tree to call and list the given options.
  - Write which company or government agency was called.
  - What are the possible, or anticipated, difficulties for rendering an effective interpretation?
  - What are the elements of that phone tree that provide the potential for ease of interpretation and ability for you as the customer to get the desired outcomes?
  - How does this experience impact you when navigating through the phone tree during an interpreted VRS call?

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #10: As a class, ask students to share the content of their homework assignment. Instructor should facilitate the class discussion, building off of key concepts and themes that appear from the students' findings.
2. Collect homework activity: SWYK assignment.
3. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show: "Lesson 11: Customer Service."
  - Supplemental document: "Lesson 11: Customer Service—Instructor's Guide"

*Instructor note: Lesson content was provided by a guest lecturer, Antontio Goodwin, a video interpreter who has a decade's worth of providing customer service in the VRS industry. In the Instructor's Guide, his introductory notes may help with the direction and flow of the lecture. The Student Manual and Workbook may also help guide the students through the lecture.*

4. Provide a second lecture and discussion based on the slide show “Lesson 11: Call Management.”

*Instructor note: If the instructor has not had much experience in the VRS setting, a guest speaker with VRS experience can be invited to class to discuss call management strategies.*

5. Lesson activities:

- Class discussion—Engage the class in a discussion on call management strategies. Ask them what strategies they have seen during their VRS call center observations. Ask them to consider the conversation features and strategies they read in their assigned readings, and discuss any of these they have seen in their observations.
- Live practice—
  - Depending on the size of your class, you may choose to use a different approach. It is suggested that both Deaf and hearing actors are invited to class after the lectures are completed. The Deaf individual will serve as an “actor” and will play the role of a VRS user. The hearing individual will play the role of the English speaker, also using VRS. Use whatever technology best fits your program (Skype, Google Hangout, FaceTime, etc) in order to simulate the feeling of a real VRS call.
  - Bring props to make the situation more authentic (headset, telephone with keypad, etc.)
  - Find another location for the Deaf and hearing actors to use while placing mock VRS calls.
  - Give the following prompts to the Deaf caller to make phone calls for students to interpret:
    - ♦ Call local hardware store to ask if they have composite decking in gray.
    - ♦ Call local pizzeria to ask their specials.
    - ♦ Call AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile to inquire about new service (cost of phone, plan rates, etc.).
    - ♦ Call local amusement park to ask hours of operation and age restrictions.
    - ♦ Call movies for closed captioning and movie times.
    - ♦ Call college admissions office to inquire about programs.
    - ♦ Call cable company to ask about packages available.
    - ♦ Call store (Walmart, Target, etc.) to inquire about how to apply for a job.
    - ♦ Call local gym to ask about becoming a member, rates, personal training.
    - ♦ Call local school about how to enroll a child.
- Alternate scenarios for live interpreting are below:

**Phone call A:** Tezz is calling to speak with Karen, the mother of one of her students, Sabrina. Tezz wants to share with Karen some behavioral problems she has been noticing in Sabrina. Karen is obviously in a hurry and distracted. Throughout the phone call, Karen is doing other things while talking with Tezz. At some point, Tezz becomes frustrated that Karen is not being more focused on discussing Sabrina’s behavior. Some overlap between Karen and Tezz happens throughout the call. At the end, Karen becomes hurried again and tells Tezz she has to go.

**Phone call B:** Karen calls Tezz, her friend of twenty years, to catch up on life and, most importantly, tell her about her recent divorce. Karen is very emotional and untrusting of the interpreter and how the interpreter is portraying Tezz, as well as interpreting her message. Several times throughout the call, Karen blames the interpreter for misunderstandings or not being clear. Tezz tries to redirect the conversation away from the interpreter. At some point, Karen breaks the news that her husband cheated on her with another man, and that was why they are getting divorced.

*\*This is not an exclusive list of practice calls. Instructors may create other scenarios for students to interpret.*

*Instructor note: While students interpret, the instructor may use the Live Interpretation Rubric to provide feedback and comments. Because the live interpreting experience is intended to focus on call management strategies, the assignment was designed to be pass/fail. Students are not VRS interpreters and are not expected to successfully implement these strategies 100 percent of the time. Instructors may use this opportunity to identify the strategies that were used as well as provide general interpreting feedback.*

Homework: “Self-Evaluation #1”

Students will complete a self-evaluation on their live interpreting work. Review and discuss the assignment and its expectations.

Due with Lesson 13

## Lesson Extension

Ask students to reflect upon their live interpreting experience and respond by composing a self-evaluation. Within the self-evaluation, students need to include what specific call management strategies they implemented into their work and how each was executed. After, students should discuss if those strategies were executed successfully and then explain why or why not. Students may also include general feedback about their work, but a majority of their self-evaluation should be focused on the discussion of call management strategies.

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Reading:

- Alley, E. (2012). “Exploring remote interpreting.” *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 4, no. 1: 111–19.

### Activity:

- After completing the reading, students will prepare three to five questions to be used during the panel discussion with the VRS consumers.

## Self-Evaluation (100 points)

	20 points	15 points	10 points	5 points
<b>Turn Taking</b>	Interpreter seamlessly manages turn taking. Consumers experience a natural flow in the conversation	Interpreter manages turn taking well. Consumers experience a natural flow in the conversation with only minimal interruption	Consumers do not experience a natural flow in the conversation. There may be lengthy pauses, or talking over one another	Consumers do not experience a natural flow in the conversation. Pausing is awkward, parties are talking over one another and flow is interrupted
<b>Cultural Mediation</b>	Recognizes all differences in hearing/Deaf norms and makes appropriate adjustments	Recognizes some differences in hearing/Deaf norms and makes appropriate adjustments	Recognizes a few differences in hearing/Deaf norms but overlooks adjustments	Overlooks differences in hearing/Deaf norms and does not make appropriate adjustments
<b>Message Equivalence (ASL to Eng)</b>	No errors with content working from ASL to English (or errors are effectively repaired)	Minimal errors	Some grave errors.	Many grave errors. Message is skewed.
<b>Message Equivalence (Eng to ASL)</b>	No errors with content working English to ASL (or errors are effectively repaired)	Minimal errors	Some grave errors.	Many grave errors. Message is skewed.
<b>Overall Delivery</b>	Interpreter is professional, confident and poised.	Interpreter is professional but may lack confidence	Interpreter lacks confidence	Interpreter is timid

## Live Interpretation Rubric

<b>Turn taking</b>	Interpreter seamlessly manages turn taking. Callers experience a natural flow in the conversation.	Interpreter manages turn taking well. Callers experience a natural flow in the conversation with only minimal interruption	Callers do not experience a natural flow in the conversation. There may be lengthy pauses or talking over one another.	Callers do not experience a natural flow in the conversation. Pausing is awkward; parties are talking over one another, and flow is interrupted.
<b>Cultural mediation</b>	Recognizes all differences in hearing/Deaf phone etiquette and makes appropriate adjustments.	Recognizes some differences in hearing/Deaf phone etiquette and makes appropriate adjustments.	Recognizes a few differences in hearing/Deaf phone etiquette but overlooks adjustments.	Overlooks differences in hearing/Deaf phone etiquette and does not make appropriate adjustments.
<b>Message equivalence (ASL to Eng)</b>	No errors with content working from ASL to English (or errors are effectively repaired).	Minimal errors.	Some grave errors.	Many grave errors. Message is skewed.
<b>Message equivalence (Eng to ASL)</b>	No errors with content working English to ASL (or errors are effectively repaired).	Minimal errors.	Some grave errors.	Many grave errors. Message is skewed.
<b>Overall delivery</b>	Interpreter is professional, confident and poised.	Interpreter is professional but may lack confidence.	Interpreter lacks confidence.	Interpreter is timid.

# LESSON 12

## Deaf Consumers' Perspectives on VRS

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**Topics of discussion:** Deaf consumers' perspectives on VRS, impact of VRS on the Deaf community, and understanding the variety of VRS call topics

### Course Goals

- 1.0 Describe the impact, costs, and benefits that video relay interpreting has had on the interpreting field and the Deaf community since its inception.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK—Student panel questions
2. Contact and confirm panelists—Deaf VRS consumers
3. Questions for Deaf VRS consumers

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. discuss the history of VRS as it pertains to the Deaf consumer's experience with new technology,
2. explain how the diverse range of VRS consumers can create demands for VRS interpreters,
3. discuss varying call types (including register) of VRS consumers,
4. identify potential frustrations for Deaf VRS consumers when cultural barriers emerge during VRS calls, and
5. discuss a variety of customer service approaches that can create positive experiences for Deaf VRS consumers.

## Student Preparation

### Reading:

- Alley, E. (2012). “Exploring remote interpreting.” *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 4, no. 1: 111–19.

### Activity:

- After completing the reading, students will prepare three to five questions to be used during the panel discussion with the VRS consumers.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #11: Students receive credit for bringing panel questions to class. Instructor should verify each student has participated and has questions ready. If there is time before the panel begins, the instructor may ask students to share their questions and brainstorm other ideas for questions if there are duplicates.
2. Lesson Activity: Panel—Deaf consumers’ perspectives on VRS.

*Instructor note: A panel of Deaf VRS consumers will be invited to class. If possible, when selecting panelists, choose individuals with varying ages, education, and background. Doing so will provide a wider range of perspective for students.*

- Instructor will open the panel and guide the opening questions (introductions/icebreaker/getting to know you questions). Afterward, students will contribute by asking the panelists questions from their list, prepared prior to class. Instructor should moderate when necessary, but class should predominantly be student-led. The panel should use the remainder of class time.
- The following are a list of questions that can be used to start the panel or throughout as needed:
  1. Compare TTY vs. VRS service. How are they different?
  2. Describe a positive experience you have had when using VRS.
  3. Describe a negative experience you have had when using VRS.
  4. When using a VRS interpreter to place a call, describe some interpreter attributes that have led to your call being processed successfully.
  5. If you could change one thing about using VRS, what would it be?
  6. If you could give one piece of advice to up-and-coming interpreters, interested in working as a VRS interpreter, what would it be?
  7. Describe how using VRS has impacted your life.

## Lesson Content

- Forming a panel:  
Suggestions for forming a panel:
  - Contact your local Deaf center or club
  - Contact Deaf professionals from your college/university
  - Attend a Deaf event and speak with community members
  
- Panel alternatives:
  - If an in-person panel is not feasible, consider hosting a virtual panel through an online platform, such as Google Hangouts or Zoom.
  - If finding multiple panelists is not feasible, consider hosting a virtual visit with one Deaf consumer of VRS through an online platform, such as Google Hangouts or Zoom.
  - If hosting a panel is not feasible, consider a replacement assignment, such as a phone/in-person interview with a Deaf individual.

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Reading:

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2010). "Video remote interpreting." Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

Homework due: "Self-Evaluation #1."

# LESSON 13

## Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting

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**Topics of discussion:** The need for video remote interpreting, remote interpreting strategies, and potential concerns of interpreting in a remote setting

### Course Goals

- 4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

- 1. SWYK journal entry
- 2. Slide show: “Lesson 13: Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting”
- 3. Video remote interpreting practice links

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1. define video remote interpreting,
- 2. discuss where and how VRI is used,
- 3. discuss the current perceptions of and research on VRI,
- 4. interpret a mock VRI call,
- 5. describe how interpreting through VRI technology impacts the interpreting process,
- 6. discuss the demands and controls of interpreting remotely,
- 7. further discuss how they navigated through those demands to make the mock VRI call successful,
- 8. demonstrate effective soft skills while interpreting mock VRI calls, and
- 9. identify situations that may require a team interpreter during VRI calls.

## Student Preparation

### Reading:

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2010). "Video remote interpreting." Available at <http://rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/>.

Homework due: "Self-Evaluation #1."

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #12: journal entry
  - Based on what you have learned thus far, what are some major differences between VRS and VRI?
  - Knowing what you know, in which venue of remote interpreting do you see yourself working?
2. Collect homework: "Self-Evaluation #1."
3. Provide a lecture and discussion based on the slide show: "Lesson 13: Introduction to Video Remote Interpreting."
4. Lesson Activity: VRI interpreting practice
  - Using the links below, have students practice interpreting either alone or in pairs.
  - VRI practice links:

### **Patient #1:**

"The Physician's Initial Assessment"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXNMHeLF4tg&list=PLHj8v2uQuZVyJRlSB5WTeS2phqRRzJCLR&index=50>

"The Initial Interview"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2yyLy85MS8&index=52&list=PLHj8v2uQuZVyJRlSB5WTeS2phqRRzJCLR>

"Performing an EKG"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOizm1DXcyI&list=PLHj8v2uQuZVyJRlSB5WTeS2phqRRzJCLR&index=54>

"Doctor Recommendations"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwt2uNIQnTM&list=PLHj8v2uQuZVyJRlSB5WTeS2phqRRzJCLR&index=58>

“Discharge Instructions”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ef3sPKJ1fiY&list=PLHj8v2uQuZVyJRlSB5WTeS2phqRRzJCLR&index=59>

**Patient #2:**

“The Initial Interview”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt5OyYPMwqg>

“Physical Exam”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOPHc8eRMUg>

“Previous History”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6cihUu9cNs>

“The Recommendation”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lxh-PdO5gbA>

5. Wrap-up and debrief: Discuss the challenges the students faced using the structure of demand control schema

## **Next Lesson Preparation**

- Student instructions: Ask students to come dressed and ready to interpret for a live mock VRI call. Assignment details will be given at the beginning of the next class session.

# LESSON 14

## Video Remote Interpreting Practice

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**Class activity:** Live video remote interpreting practice

### Course Goals

- 4.0 Formulate mock interpretations using simulated video relay technology and telephone systems.
- 5.0 Describe the range of interactions and call types that can occur in the video relay environment.
- 6.0 Demonstrate effective call management skills during mock video relay calls.

### Materials Needed

- 1. Contact and confirm Deaf and hearing actors for class session
- 2. VRI practice scenario scripts
- 3. Recording equipment for student interpretations
- 4. Rotation schedule

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1. interpret a mock VRI call,
- 2. describe how interpreting through VRI technology impacts the interpreting process,
- 3. discuss the demands and controls of interpreting remotely,
- 4. further discuss how they navigated through those demands to make the mock VRI call successful,
- 5. demonstrate effective soft skills while interpreting mock VRI calls, and
- 6. identify situations that may require a team interpreter for VRI calls.

### Student Preparation

Student instructions: Ask students to come dressed and ready to interpret for a live mock VRI call. Assignment details will be given at the beginning of the class session.

## Lesson Sequence

1. SWYK #13: Class Discussion
  - What call management strategies will you use today while interpreting?
  - What are some of your concerns and fears about interpreting for customers remotely?
2. Lesson activity: Live video remote interpreting practice

*Instructor note: Before class, contact two Deaf actors and two hearing actors to participate in this practice session. Send scripts to the actors ahead of class time. Ask the actors to be familiar with the script, but they may improvise when working with the students. Set up the classroom to facilitate two separate VRI scenarios. Modify this setup as needed. Use computers or iPads to create a mock VRI setting (i.e., Deaf and hearing actors use a separate room and connect with the students through an iPad or computer.*

- Place students into interpreting teams. Based on your class size, have one or two students rotate as the observer. Instruct the students to spend five minutes meeting with their team to discuss their strategies for effectively interpreting a VRI call as a team (strategies taken from the VRS Team Interpreting lecture). Teams will then interpret the mock VRI call. After the call has been completed, ask the teams to spend five minutes discussing their experience as both team members. Use the rotation schedule (appendix) to ensure all students have the chance to interpret each scenario.
3. Debrief session: Ask students to share their experience of remote interpreting. Use the following questions to guide or start the debrief session:
    - Describe your experience as the interpreter in a remote location, separate from the Deaf and hearing customers.
    - Did you experience any moments where you had to culturally mediate in order to accurately convey the message?
    - Share a demand and control that you faced while interpreting.
    - What soft skills were needed to ensure the communication between the Deaf and hearing customers was successful and clear?
    - What strategies did you and your team use to work together and protect the integrity of the message?
    - After this in-class practice, share one piece of your experience that impacted you most.

## Lesson Content

Lesson content with transcripts for actors taken from:

- *Home Health Care*: VRSII Educator Empowerment Series, November 2015. Mock Interpreting Script.
- *U.S. Post Office Safety Meeting*: Interpreter Practice Materials. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media. Available at <http://store.signmedia.com/1555.html>.
- *Meeting with a Funeral Director*: Interpreter Practice Materials. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media. Available at <http://store.signmedia.com/1562.html>.

See supplemental lesson content document with transcripts on curriculum website: ([www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum](http://www.vrsii.com/vrscurriculum)).

**Rotation schedule**—This template may be used to arrange a rotation schedule for students.

	Script 1—Classroom #:	Script 2—Classroom #:	Script 3—Classroom #:
1:00–1:15	Welcome, activity explanation, and actor introductions		
1:10–1:15	Move to appropriate rooms		
1:15–1:20	Interpreter team 1 preconference meeting	Interpreter team 2 preconference meeting	Interpreter team 3 Preconference meeting
1:20–1:35	Interpreter team 1 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter team 2 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter team 3 (1–2 observers)
1:35–1:40	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief
1:40–1:45	Brief break and switch rooms		
1:45–1:50	Interpreter team 2 preconference meeting	Interpreter team 3 Preconference meeting	Interpreter team 1 preconference meeting
1:50–2:05	Interpreter team 2 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter teams 3 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter team 1 (1–2 observers)
2:05–2:10	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief
2:10–2:15	Brief break and switch rooms		
2:15–2:20	Interpreter team 3 preconference meeting	Interpreter team 1 preconference meeting	Interpreter team 2 preconference meeting
2:20–2:35	Interpreter team 2 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter team 2 (1–2 observers)	Interpreter team 2 (1–2 observers)
2:35–2:40	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief	Interpreter team debrief
3:45–4:00	Interpreter teams switch out with observers (Observers become the interpreter team, interpreter teams become the observers)		

\*Repeat rotation schedule for the second half of the class.

## Lesson Extension

Homework: “Self-Evaluation #2”

1. Ask students to reflect upon their live interpreting experience and respond by composing a self-evaluation. Within the self-evaluation, students need to include what specific call management strategies they implemented into their work and how each was executed. After, students should discuss if those strategies were executed successfully and then explain why or why not. Students may also include general feedback about their work, but a majority of their self-evaluation should be focused on the discussion of call management strategies implemented.

Due with the Final exam/last class session

## Next Lesson Preparation

### Readings:

- Bower, K. (2015). “Stress and burnout in video relay service (VRS) interpreting.” *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1. Article 2. Available at <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/2>.
- Dean, R. K., R. Q. Pollard, and V. J. Samar (2010). “RID research grant underscores occupational health risks: VRS and K-12 settings most concerning.” *VIEWS*, Winter, 41–43.
- Roman, G. A. and V. Samar. (2015). “Workstation ergonomics improves posture and reduces musculoskeletal pain in video interpreters.” *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1, Article 7. Available at <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/7>.

### Self-Care presentations:

Students should have already been listening to the online self-care lectures, following along with the pdf of the slide show and preparing a presentation for the class next week.

1. Remind students of the presentation requirements and dress code.
2. Links to online self-care lectures:  
Password for all videos: VRSCurriculum
  - a. Biomechanics—<https://vimeo.com/179782607>.
  - b. Health Literacy—<https://vimeo.com/179775322>.
  - c. Introduction to Self-Care—<https://vimeo.com/179775592>.
  - d. Physical Activity—<https://vimeo.com/179775604>.
  - e. Self Awareness: Posture—<https://vimeo.com/179775620>.
  - f. Self Awareness: Biomechanics—<https://vimeo.com/179775610>.

Due with Lesson 15.

# LESSON 15

## Self-Care for ASL/English Interpreters

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**Topic of discussion:** Self-care for ASL/English interpreters

### Course Goals

7.0 Discuss self-care strategies specific to the demands of video relay interpreting.

### Materials Needed

1. SWYK—Student Self-Care Presentations
2. Self-Care Presentation Rubric (found at the end of this lesson plan)
3. Video recording equipment if necessary

### Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. define self-care and assess the state of their own self-care,
2. discuss injury as defined by the interpreting field and as defined by Western health-care system,
3. cite relevant research on self-care,
4. demonstrate proper standing and sitting posture,
5. cite important biomechanical considerations,
6. recognize high and low biomechanical risk tendencies,
7. describe with physical activity guidelines as a strategy for self-care, and
8. provide suggestions for symptom management.

### Student Preparation

#### Readings:

- Bower, K. (2015). "Stress and burnout in video relay service (VRS) interpreting." *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1: Article 2. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/2>.

- Dean, R. K., R. Q. Pollard, and V. J. Samar. (2010). "RID research grant underscores occupational health risks: VRS and K-12 settings most concerning." *VIEWS: Winter*: 41–43.
- Roman, G. A. and V. Samar. (2015). "Workstation ergonomics improves posture and reduces musculoskeletal pain in video interpreters." *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1: Article 7. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol24/iss1/7>.

### **Self-Care presentations:**

- a. Students should have already been listening to the online self-care lectures, following along with the pdf of the slide show and preparing a presentation for the class next week.

Remind students of the presentation requirements and dress code.

Links to online self-care lectures:

Password for all videos: VRSCurriculum

- i. Biomechanics—<https://vimeo.com/179782607>
- ii. Health Literacy—<https://vimeo.com/179775322>
- iii. Introduction to Self-Care—<https://vimeo.com/179775592>
- iv. Physical Activity—<https://vimeo.com/179775604>
- v. Self Awareness: Posture—<https://vimeo.com/179775620>
- vi. Self Awareness: Biomechanics—<https://vimeo.com/179775610>

### **Lesson Sequence**

1. SWYK #14: Students receive credit for attending class, dressing appropriately, and being prepared for their presentation.
2. Lesson activity: Student presentations.

### **Lesson Extensions**

- Partner-up and perform postural assessments on one another while interpreting (in either sitting or standing or both). Is your partner assuming the proper neutral posture discussed in lecture?
- Partner-up and perform biomechanical assessments on one another while interpreting. Does your partner present with any of the biomechanical considerations discussed in lecture?
- Host a physical activity session during class.
- Possibly consider buying some physioballs and resistive bands. Perform the upper body/core strengthening exercises that were explained in lecture.

### **Next Lesson Preparation**

Activity: If applicable, students will study for their final exam. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to give a written or performance final.

Homework due: "Self-Evaluation #2."

# Self-Care Presentations

## 150 points

### Explanation:

When working in the video relay service industry, interpreters often need to take a personal inventory of their mental, physical, emotional, psychological, and even spiritual welfare. Each of these are examples of self-care, necessary for the longevity and agility of an interpreter's career.

Students will investigate an approach to self-care and present their findings in class.

### Requirements:

- Watch “Intro to Self-Care,” “Health Literacy,” and “Biomechanics of Interpreting” videos.
  - Be prepared to take notes on these videos. Your notes will be turned in on the day of your presentation.
- Choose one of the following topics to investigate and share with the class:
  - Biomechanics
  - Physical activity
  - Posture
- Watch the corresponding video of your topic.
- Find two additional resources to support your topic.

### Presentation requirements:

- Visual aid(s) is required.
- Four to six PowerPoint slides/handout/posterboard
- One slide/segment of the presentation must summarize the “Intro to Self-Care” and “Health Literacy” videos.
- Include references in your presentation.
- Ten to twelve minutes
- Present in ASL.
- No written paper is required.

## Self-Care Presentations Rubric

Category	Criteria	Total points	Score
<b>Organization (15 points)</b>	The presentation has clear objectives.	5	
	Information is presented in a logical sequence.	5	
	Presentation appropriately cites requisite number of references.	5	
<b>Content (45 points)</b>	Introduction is attention-getting, lays out the self-care topic well, and establishes a framework for the rest of the presentation (summary of the intro videos that lead into the main content of the presentation).	5	
	Technical terms are well-defined and clearly described in ASL.	5	
	Presentation contains accurate information.	10	
	Material included is relevant to the overall message/purpose.	10	
	Appropriate amount of material is prepared, and points made reflect their relative importance.	10	
	There is an obvious conclusion summarizing the presentation.	5	
<b>Presentation (40 points)</b>	Student maintains good eye contact with the audience and is appropriately animated (e.g., gestures, moving around, etc.).	5	
	Student signs clearly and uses appropriate signing space.	5	
	Delivery is poised, controlled, and smooth.	5	
	Appropriate language choices are made to articulate concepts.	5	
	Visual aids are well prepared, informative, effective, and not Distracting.	5	
	Length of presentation is within the assigned time limits.	5	
	Information was well communicated.	10	
<b>Application (20 points)</b>	Application to the material being studied in this class, other ITP classes, and student's potential work as a VRS interpreter.	10	
	Student provided an in-depth commentary of his/her self-care topic and its pertinence to his/her career as an interpreter (e.g., How will this knowledge impact his/her current habits?)	10	
<b>Overall impression (30 points)</b>	Presentation is very interesting, student is pleasant, and information is communicated clearly.	30	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>150</b>	



*The Introduction to VRS Interpreting curriculum guide* provides educators with a valuable tool for teaching interpreting students about work in video relay service (VRS) and video remote interpreting (VRI) settings.

Students will learn the challenges that are associated with this work, as well as the interpreting skills needed to develop to do it effectively.

While this curriculum is not designed to fully prepare students to work in these settings upon completing the course, the lessons can be a springboard for success in VRS and VRI settings.

The curriculum was designed with flexibility in mind and can be used in one-, two-, or three credit-hour courses. Each lesson contains a lesson plan, recommended readings, and the necessary supporting materials for the course.

The curriculum guide also gives you access to a host of online tools, including additional curriculum information, as well as downloadable lesson plans and slideshow presentations.

Whether you're an instructor preparing to teach an entire course or looking for just a few lessons, you'll find invaluable information in this curriculum guide.

