National Multicultural Interpreter Project  
Module: Decision Making in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities  
Suggested Teaching Activities

1. Utilizing the Unit I lecture notes and the suggested guidelines of the NMIP Team Leaders as background for discussion.
   
   A. List the American cultural values imbedded in the RID Code of Ethics that potentially conflict with the specific cultural and linguistic group. Compare and contrast to a targeted cultural group that you are discussing such as United States American Mainstream and Asian/Pacific Islander or Hispanic/Latino.
   
   B. Introduce the lecture notes from Unit I. Review the models of historic models of interpreting and an overview of ethical decision-making.
   
   C. Discuss when do these correlate to one or more “models” of interpreting when do have factors that are in conflict or contrast to these models.
   
   D. Compare and analyze the culturally and linguistically diverse’s cultural and consumer’s history practices of using interpreters
   
   E. Analyze cultural view of interpreter role model of interpreting.
   
   F. Discuss prevalence of “helper” or other interpreter models used in your local communities both Hearing and Deaf.
   
   G. Discuss “ally” model of interpretation as it applies to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
   
   H. Discuss a “holistic” approach to interpreting.
   
   I. Discuss a liaison or escort interpreter roles and responsibilities. (See the interview of panel activity below.)
   
   J. Compare and contrast to the roles of persons working with Deaf Blind consumers as Support Service Providers and interpreters. How is the role expanded or changed to include the visual cultural information?

2. View: NMIP Videotapes:
   
   A. NMIP Multicultural Interpreting Issues: from the Deaf Perspective
   
   B. NMIP Multicultural Interpreting Issues: a Multicultural Interpreter Perspective
   
   C. Discussion: Identify the guiding principles, sociolinguistic variables and other complicating cultural factors required to select and match interpreters and/or deaf and hearing interpreter teams to various, consumers, settings and topics within the culturally and linguistically diverse situations and settings.

3. Focusing on a multicultural group or a culturally specific group organize one on one interviews and/or invite guest speakers and panel members to engage in dialogues from:
   
   A. Deaf consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
   
   B. Family members of deaf persons
   
   C. Foreign language interpreters in work with the various communities
   
   D. Individuals who function in advocacy roles as deaf service agency individuals; case managers; social workers; lawyers

   Discuss the interpreter’s role and function as a linguistic and cultural mediator contrasted to that of an advocate as presented in lecture notes Unit II.

   Discuss examples of disparate cultural paradigms from current events and the instructors and participants experiences.

   When are the deaf and hearing consumers’ perceptions, assumptions and expectations different?
Contrast the differences between the interpreter’s role and function as a linguistic and cultural mediator as contrasted to an advocate’s role for both Deaf and Hearing consumers.

4. Activity for Selecting Interpreters and Teams

A. Distribute: NMIP Interpreter Directory and Assignments.
B. Explain activity goal is to match the assignment with an interpreter.
C. Assign partners or small groups to function as interpreter coordinators. Based on the time may choose for each group to discuss all the assignments or selected numbers.
D. Group or partners report out their choices.
   (1) Determine if ethnicity or culture is a critical factor? Yes/No Why?
   (2) What is the best scenario - single interpreter or team or other?
   (3) Determine if additional information is needed? What? From whom?
E. View the Videotape - NMIP Multicultural Assignments
   Discuss the prior choices. Do they still apply? Would there be any suggested changes? Why or why not? Analyze and discuss of what assignments fall into the category of anyone with the content knowledge and interpreting skills can do it, with assignments where the specific cultural and linguistic content knowledge, interpreting skills and affect background is essential.

View the videotape: NMIP Multicultural Interpreter Issues: A Deaf Consumer’s Perspective
View the video:

(TRT 33.00) English/Spanish/Lenguaje de Signos de Mexico with Open English Captions)

This videotape was designed to provide mental health professionals and sign language interpreters information on providing services in multilingual and multicultural contexts. It uses a narration and vignettes to demonstrate some of the complexities of providing appropriate hearing and Deaf multilingual interpreters.

Using the setting of mental health discuss the cultural and linguistic factors that influenced the selection and use of the interpreter team.

List other areas of interpreting such as educational K-12, medical, mental health, and discuss the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on these situations.

5. Skill Building - strategies to determine identity one’s own value systems and cultural biases contrasted to consumers

Select/copy dialogues from “Cross Cultural Dialogues” by Craig Sorti


Make groups of three to four students, give each group one dialogue to read to the group.

The group determines from each dialogue what cultural conflicts may be occurring.

What are the value systems as demonstrated in the consumer(s)’s dialogue?

How could it impact the interpreter’s role?
Each student then discusses the printed “Background” information that corresponds to 
the cultural dialogue

Class discusses applications in interpreting settings.

Compare and contrast one’s own values with values identified in the settings. Discuss the 
particular impact on self and consumers. Identify strategies to handle the perceived cultural 
conflict or bias.

6. Recognize that culturally and linguistically diverse communities’ view of the interpreter’s role 
may be different than that of the dominant culture.

Case study interviews and stories videotaped identified the culturally and linguistically diverse 
communities’ varying perspective on what they expect the interpreter to do (or not do), 
indicates that the choices that the interpreter makes on what their role is in a given situation 
can impact the rapport and communication process.

The interpreter may need to make decisions between what is “expected” from the consumer’s 
perspective and or experience and what is expounded and expected “professionally” as the 
interpreter’s role.

Do these two expectations match. Followup discussion or interviews

To interpreters - Have they ever been on assignment they particularly with a culturally 
and linguistically different consumer and or situation where he/she felt they were not the 
most appropriate, best prepared or qualified?

To coordinators - What information they get prior to interpreter assignments?

Compare and discuss the responses from the agency and to with interpreter’s responses 
and based on the responses:

Was the information sufficient?
What other information would have been necessary or helpful?
What strategies would you use to get the information you need from the agency?

7. Provide activities to enhance and create awareness between culturally and linguistically 
diverse interpreter’s experiences and challenges working as interpreters. Create an 
opportunity to do career or role model interviews or panel discussions with interpreters who 
are from a multilingual or multicultural background include foreign language interpreters:

Discuss how they came into the field of interpreting with a focus on:
A. How did each one get into the field?
B. What do they do differently when interpreting for consumer from their own culturally and 
linguistic community compared to another culture and/or mainstream culture?
C. What training and information would have been helpful in preparation for working outside 
of their own community?
D. What are the dynamics of using family and/or community members for communication? 
Did they have this experience growing up?
E. What are the dynamics of community’s use of interpreters between community 
language(s) dialects and English.

8. Utilizing the Multicultural Case Studies:

A. Read the case studies to be able to recognize the cultural implications of one’s own
specific cultural norms, behaviors and values and their impact on an interpreting assignment.

The participants need to be aware that the interpreters’ role does not allow one to impose one’s value system on another culture’s value system. An example may be that the family’s involvement, in some culturally and linguistically diverse communities, is frequently critical to the deaf consumer’s ability to have effective access and services.

B. Identify several case studies that emphasize the partnership aspects of the team members. Provide the information on “IT” by Angela Roth.

Class discussion on “IT” by Angela Roth
What is IT?
How can IT be developed?
Interview someone you believe has IT
Report to back to participants

C. Have group members interview each other to learn why they chose interpreting. If any hearing child of deaf adults or culturally and linguistically diverse participants are present then contrast and compare those answers to others from the field.

Interview Questions:
How did you get interested in interpreting?
How does your family view your career choice?
What have you had to do to attain your goals?
Discuss common and differing values
Discuss common and differing backgrounds
Discuss differences varying experiences and motivations

D. Read selected or a set of Multicultural Case Studies to do role-plays.

In groups of three or four participants re-enact one scenario from the group. During the first re-enactment time use the United States dominant cultural style without cultural awareness or sensitivity of the potential cultural conflicts involved.
Use this role play to make a list the possible culturally appropriate cultural mediation strategies that the interpreter(s) could use.
Discuss the implications of each.
Role play the scenario a second time applying a strategy developed within the group.
Is their strategy for behaviors that satisfies both expectations?
Discuss these ideas regarding “IT” within the context of the multicultural community.

To date, the term used by Deaf consumers to indicate that level of rapport is “attitude.” What do Deaf consumers mean by the interpreter’s “attitude” a “good” versus “bad” attitude? Why do some individuals fit in with cultures not their own, while others remain peripheral and unaccepted? How does this enhance or impede the communication process when an interpreter must remain in his/her professional role?

“There seems to be a correlation between the non-textual skills and behaviors that an interpreter exhibits that allow for multicultural cross-mediation. The result is consumers’ acceptance of the interpreter’s professional role without compromising the consumers, either the culturally and linguistically diverse consumer(s) or dominant culture’s consumer(s) need for rapport and trust necessary in the communication process.”
By exploring the various perspectives and behaviors that are attributed to “good” and “bad” attitude by dominant and culturally and linguistically diverse consumers, we can develop a composite of behavioral choices an interpreter can make to establish a rapport with consumers and maintain professional behavior.

An analysis of attitudes and behaviors that elicit positive responses from culturally and linguistically diverse community members that are useful in establishing rapport:

- Participants will break up into groups.
  - Discuss a personal situation in which they experienced an individual who fit in with a group that was culturally and linguistically different than his/her own group.
  - List the behavior(s) and the related value exemplified in that situation.
  - Note: (Do you want to include the negative behaviors of someone who did NOT fit in?)
  - Groups come back together and report back the list, creating a composite picture of behaviors and traits.
  - Discuss the composite picture, and how this would be applied in a culturally and linguistically diverse interpreting situations

9. Obtain cultural information as it occurs during an interpreted event, and share this information within the team interpreting framework.

- Invite a panel to discuss consumers and interpreters perspective’s reviewing personal or case studies.
  - Moderate the discussion to focus is on problems that have arisen during assignments, and how those were or could have been handled more effectively.
  - What were the successful strategies, case studies where adaptations were made appropriately.

10. Develop strategies appropriately and effectively involving deaf and hearing consumers in the negotiating and decision making process and resolving cross-cultural conflict.

- An issue in cross-multicultural interpreting is what is “interjecting” or “advising” compared with what is consumer education and awareness. While this perspective can vary with different specific cultural and linguistic communities, addressing this issue will be helpful in the decision making process for appropriate interpreting model choices within the dominant culture and current expansion of interpreter's assignments and roles. It also allows for discussion of drawing in the consumer as part of the team.

- Foreign and spoken language guidelines - Invite a foreign language interpreter to class. Discuss how spoken language interpreters have long been aware of informing consumers of what is socially acceptable and “guiding” the consumer in what is culturally appropriate.

Questions to consider:

- What information is appropriate to give to the consumers?
- What is a cultural expansion?
- Which consumers need that information, which do not?
How does one differentiate?
When is the information given?
How is this different than the helper model? The cultural mediator?
What is the impact on the interpreter/consumer “team?”

Another issue related to “not advising” is the preparation of the interpreter for interactions and family involvement which may vary from community to community.

Discussion of case studies.

Guiding Questions and Suggestions
- What is the balance between individual right to self determination/ and family or group determination?
- What is the Deaf consumer’s involvement in decision making processes?
- What are the cultural decision making processes for a specific cultural group?
- What is the level and significance in the involvement of family and other significant persons?

11. Negotiate between one’s own cultural norms, as a culturally linguistically diverse interpreter, and the dominant cultural norms for professional self-advocacy and empowerment.

Utilize NMIP Multicultural Case Studies to discuss concepts of “In group” compared with “out group” consumer preferences and expectations of the interpreters:

- Discuss cultural preferences
  - Individual/familial preferences
  - Issues of impartiality
  - Faithful interpretation
  - Cultural view of confidentiality
  - Other cultural values

12. Using NMIP videotape or other culturally embedded materials. Develop an interpreting experience that allows participants to select a partner(s) from same and different cultural background and make initial preparations to work as a team.
   - Conduct pre-team meetings.
   - Utilized the material to function as a team.
   - Debrief with partner.

13. Using the Multicultural Case Studies, discuss in small groups that include both hearing/and deaf members to discuss the studies from both a Hearing and Deaf perspective from the non-dominant and dominant cultural perspectives.

This activity is included in both interpreting skill and decision-making. The emphasis can be simultaneously placed on improving skills in both content and teaming.

   - Implement a dominant culture and minority culture partnership to complement synergy and provide two-way mentoring opportunities.

   - Assign participants to view a videotape of a culturally and linguistically diverse situation. Have teams of interpreters including one member from the cultural group of the videotape and one member who is not from that group. Assign the students to view the tape each making notes of cultural concepts, vocabulary; cultural themes, behaviors and values expressed that may be unfamiliar to the individual. Discuss what is explicit and what was implicit in each text. What references depend on a assumed “cultural context” to be
understood. What references are clarified within the text. Exchange lists and “co-
mentor” each other regarding the potential interpretations or cultural meanings. Assign a
second tape and reverse the process. If information is still needed from outside of the
team, identify who or what could be an outside resource?

C. Have a followup discussion on the development of their teaming skills. Have each
member describe what was helpful in the co-mentoring process and talk from their own
experiences. Each partner should practice active listening skills.

D. Extend activities to mentored multicultural interpreting experiences. Arrange to work or
observe cultural teams that include certified and qualified deaf interpreter(s), cultural
liaisons, and hearing team members.

E. During a interpreted conference, workshop or meeting sponsored by a culturally and
linguistically diverse group, initiate a cross-cultural mentorship with an individual whose
cultural and skill development can complement your own areas for growth and
development. Arrange and plan for pre and post sessions to debrief with each other.

F. Repeat the above activity as part of a larger team experience. Identify a lead interpreter
who is responsible for the cross-cultural dynamics and can lead or facilitate a pre and
post session for the team members.

14. Continue to promote the appreciation and value of culturally and linguistically diverse
interpreters within the interpreting profession and by consumers of interpreting services by
exposing interpreters to the culturally and linguistically diverse Deaf/Interpreter organizations.

Note: NMIP student interview’s surveys found that most students were unaware of
organizations that focus on culturally and linguistically diverse Deaf and interpreter
concerns. They did not have information on National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA),
Intertribal Deaf Council, (IDC), Mano A Mano or other NMIP resources. Since the
professional development and the furthering of knowledge is a lifelong pursuit in our
field, this awareness of what organizations are available for continuing education to
increase the quality and quantity of services for culturally and linguistically diverse
communities is essential.

A. Assign small groups to research on specific culturally and linguistically diverse resources
to include national, regional, local, and individuals from both Deaf and Hearing groups.
Each group can focus on a specific cultural and linguistic community and make a
resource list.

(1) Each group reports back on what each resource has to offer to include, but not
limited to interpreters from that community, bibliography, web sites, newsletters,
conference and meetings.

Resource: NMIP web site
NMIP Bibliography and Resource Directory
NMIP Consultant and Presenter Directory.
### National Multicultural Interpreter Project
Multicultural and Multilingual Settings
Potential for Bridging Cultural Communications

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### National Multicultural Interpreter Project
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