Training interpreters using contextualised, immersive, interactive Virtual Reality technology
Monash University T&I Studies and Esolutions
Funded by VITS LanguageLoop Research Grants Program

Purpose / Objectives:
• This project will develop an authentic, immersive, interactive learning activity for interpreters in dealing with work-based challenges using virtual reality (VR) technologies.
• The aim is to provide evidence-based, pedagogically motivated, authentic situational interpretations in a safe environment so that participants will be better prepared to deal with unexpected situations and the complexities of the role of an interpreter in contemporary transcultural societies.
• Interpreters will be immersed in a family violence scenario.
• They will have to deal with the competing interests of other members of a multidisciplinary team (police, healthcare personnel).

This project adopts a multidisciplinary approach aimed to:
• ensure the development of best practice by teaching the skills needed for situation awareness;
• engage with interpreters using situational learning
• give emphasis to reflective practice to encourage critical thinking, reasoning and judgement;
• increase the capacity of interpreters to identify and manage the critical human factor elements of their role;
• provide learning techniques to mitigate risk; prepare them to deal with clients professionally while providing equitable service
• raise the profile of the interpreter, and the pivotal role they play in intercultural contexts

Non-Vr example (2015, Ryerson Uni, Canada)
• https://h5p.org/branching-scenario

Methodology
• Development of content (script) for the scenario, which will track the various stages of the journey undertaken by an interpreter within a family violence context. It will include interactions with the various players (e.g. victim, perpetrator, social worker, police, etc).
• Industry partners will be invited to participate in consultative meetings to gather resourceful information about the immersive scenario.
• Development of VR interface with Esolutions at Monash
• Pilot testing & QA assessment
• Development of Training Module

Outcomes
• For the language industry, a better prepared workforce, able to deal with a wide range of challenging scenarios
• Training interpreters living in remote areas. This is currently one of the biggest challenges in the industry and this project will provide an alternative to offer training using a non-traditional, cost-effective method.
• Benefit to the industry and their clients: the interpreter has traditionally been viewed as providing a service as an external provider. This project will provide a platform to reflect on the importance of the interpreter to successful mediated communication and to consider their role as an integral part of a professional team.
• Can also be used for training of interpreting students