SLPI PAPER #13: WHY SIX TO TEN
SLPI TRAINING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS?

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> One other question...on your website, you mention that you admit up to 10 participants. Since I have already been trained and re-trained, I will be the Team Coordinator and Tammy Adams will be the Administrative Coordinator. Do we both count in the "up to 10" head count? Also, while trying to select participants, there are 11 vital players within our state that we would like to be trained as evaluators/interviewers. We have 7 staff interpreters plus 4 deaf staff leaders we want involved in the training. So, what I'm asking is: Can we have 11 in the training-not counting Tammy Adams and me? Thanks, in advance, for your response.
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> > Belinda Montgomery, Coordinator of Interpreter Services. Alabama Division of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) State Office, Montgomery, AL, November 2003

The above request from Belinda is a request we have received several times. Therefore, we decided it was appropriate for us to address Belinda's request as one of our frequently asked SLPI questions.

Consistent with the above request from Belinda, we state in our SLPI Training Workshop paper that there should be six to ten participants per training workshop (F. Caccamise and W. Newell, *SLPI Training Workshop: Planning, Implementation, and Follow-U*p),. Why six (6) to ten (10)?

The reason for a minimum number of six (6) participants is to help ensure the benefits of the "team" concept. These benefits include local SLPI Teams having a sufficient number of members to provide SLPI services (interviews, ratings, and follow-up meetings). These services include conducting re-ratings when there is rater disagreement, when there are re-rating requests by persons taking the SLPI, and when there are re-rating requests by SLPI Coordinators. In addition, having a minimum of six (6) SLPI Team Members helps to ensure continuity of SLPI Team Membership when members leave a team and additional persons need to be trained to become SLPI Team Members. Another important benefit is that discussion among potential SLPI Team Members and SLPI Trainers during training enables Team Members to reach consensus as to what is acceptable signing to local skilled American Sign Language (ASL) communicators. The importance of this to successful and appropriate use of the SLPI is discussed in SLPI PAPER #3 in this document, *What Does the SLPI Assess?*, and in *SLPI Notebook* Section 5, *Skills Important for Sign Language Communication and Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating*.

Now, onto the (more) frequently asked question about the maximum number of 10 participants. This number was arrived at after many SLPI Training Workshop experiences. It is truly amazing how increasing the number above 10 workshop participants influences workshop dynamics and achieving the above. A basic reason for the maximum number of 10 is the importance of clear visual access for all participants to both viewing SLPI videos and to the discussion among all participants and SLPI Trainers. Another most important reason is the need for all participants to have the opportunity to express their views and to reach consensus on what is acceptable signing

to local highly skilled sign language communicators. This discussion is also critical to participants achieving consistency in interpreting the SLPI Rating Scale, and, therefore, achieving consistency in their SLPI ratings.

In the past, in an attempt to circumvent this maximum of 10, we have allowed previously trained SLPI Team Members, including SLPI Coordinators, to attend SLPI Training Workshop as observers. However, this has never been successful. The interactive nature of SLPI Training Workshops does not lend itself to "passive" observation. The exception to this is for persons who are serving or will serve as SLPI Administrative Coordinators, and this is only successful for persons who serve strictly in administrative roles; that is, they do not conduct SLPI interview, ratings, and/or follow-up meeting services. We encourage SLPI Administrative Coordinators to attend those parts of SLPI Training Workshops that are beneficial to their performing their administrative responsibilities.

Given the above, it is critical that SLPI Coordinators (with the exception noted in the paragraph above for SLPI Administrative Coordinators) are always included among the 6-10 workshop participants.

We recognize, as stated in SLPI PAPER #11 in this document, *Adding SLPI Team Members*, that: "You may wish to add members to your SLPI Team in order (a) to increase the number of individuals/ programs your Team can serve, and (b) to replace SLPI Team Members who have left your SLPI Team." Rather than increase the number of workshop participants above 10, therefore, we recommend that SLPI Coordinators apply the guidelines in SLPI PAPER #11 to help ensure that they have the number of SLPI Team Members their program needs to provide quality SLPI services on an on-going basis.

Hopefully the above discussion has helped you to understand why we recommend 6-10 participants per SLPI Training Workshop. As always, we are most happy to discuss how we may best work with and support you in providing in-service training for current SLPI Team Members, as well as training for potential SLPI Team Members.