What can we learn from research?
Research

• Many descriptions
• Research: inconsistent or mixed findings:
  – F2F communication
  – no differences between F2F and CMC
  – negative effects of F2F communication
• No distinction between different types of e-mediation
Types

- Face-to-face
- Video conference
- Phone conference
- Synchronous chat
- Audio
- Visual
- Text
- Email / text messaging
- Voice mail
- Video mail

Asynchronous

Synchronous
Hybrid

• Online intake:
  – Typewritten messages
  – Human mediator
  – No direct contact between the parties

• Offline conflicts: hierarchical labor conflicts
Online intake

• Previous research in F2F mediations:
  – both supervisors and subordinates feel satisfied with mediation
  – supervisors feel significantly more satisfied
  – The perception of procedural fairness and the experience of recognition on the part of the mediator is esp. crucial for subordinates
Anderson et al., 2003; Keltner et al 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High power – free</th>
<th>Low power – shackles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confront – approach</td>
<td>Avoid or withdraw - inhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to resources</td>
<td>Less access to resources</td>
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</table>

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<th>High power</th>
<th>Low power</th>
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<tr>
<td>Express emotions (anger) more easily</td>
<td>Refrain from expressing anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience emotions (anger) less</td>
<td>Epistemic motivation (impact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no impact</td>
<td>Heavy impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hybrid

Hierarchical Position

Mediation Type

Agreement

Satisfaction, trust
Satisfaction

Face-to-face: $F(1,54) = 4.83, \ p < .05$
E-supported: $F(1,52) = 0.88, \ p = ns$

Controlled for gender + age
Trust

Face-to-face: $F(1,54) = 7.98, \ p < .01$

E-supported: $F(1,52) = 0.07, \ p = ns$

Controlled for gender + age
Conclusion

• Online tools: no negative effect on parties’ perceptions of the mediation
• It seems that esp. the weaker party in the mediation benefits from the use of online tools
• Online tools may fulfill the needs of the one low in power (recognition, support and control), and hinder the more powerful party to exert influence directly
Fully e-supported

• Fully e-supported mediation
  – asynchronous communication
  – Human mediator edits the answers
  – No direct contact between the parties
  – Parenting plan

• 12 trained mediators – 80 couples

• Results: 76% agreement; 8% partial agreement; 81% considers to use it again
Results

Mean scores of men and women (n=126)

DJ PJ INF J INT J
Men
Women

Results
Results

Mean scores of men and women (n=126)

Trust
Voice
Well-being
SAT

MEN
WOMEN
Implications

• The type of communication channels to be used is determined by
  o parties’ level of competitiveness (How do they talk about/to each other?), level of conflict escalation (How emotional is the conflict?)
  o The level to which parties have insight in the situation
Implications

• Asynchronous communication to
  o create cooperative mindset
  o decrease the level of conflict – vent emotions
  o enhance parties’ insight in the situation
  o establish trust in the mediator

• In one mediation, different types of communication channels may be used (as parties develop)