Provost's Learning Innovations Grant for Faculty
Request for Full Proposal
2002-2003

Please send your completed grant proposal (4 pages, plus attachments), one original and eleven copies, to
Linda Jones, 4000 Eastman
by 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 20, 2002.
No hand written proposals will be accepted.
Notification of awards will be made by Friday, March 22, 2002.

Project Title:
Introduction to Learning American Sign Language

Applicant(s):
Name: Rico Peterson  Telephone: 56431
Department: ASLIE  College: NTID
Name: Leslie Greer  Telephone: 54919
Department: ASLIE  College: NTID
Name: Christine Monikowski  Telephone: 56539
Department: ASLIE  College: NTID
Title and Summary of Project

Introduction to Learning American Sign Language

Communication plays an essential role in bringing together Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people. Ready access to fundamental information about learning ASL has relevance to both college and institute priorities. RIT has taken great strides to assure that all members of the campus community respect the diversity of language and communication choices available here. Having begun offering ASL classes in 1968, NTID has an established reputation as a leader in this field. Among the benefits of this long experience is insight into the many important ways that learning ASL differs from learning other languages.

The purpose of this course is to offer prospective signers an opportunity to explore different strategies for learning American Sign Language. By sampling a variety of alternative approaches to learning, students will develop metacognitive abilities that allow them to become both more effective and more independent learners. The objective of this class is much more to discover "How to Learn" than "What to Learn".

The course consists of a series of online learning modules exploring the rudimentary aspects of learning ASL including Learning Strategies in Adult Education, Deaf Culture, Comparative Language Features of English and ASL, Second Language Acquisition, Phonology, Morphology/Classifiers, Language Variation in Deaf Communities, and Limitations of the Language Classroom. Each module will include a 20-30 minute lecture (on CD-ROM or videotape), selected readings, exercises, and an evaluation. (See attached sample lesson plan)

To our knowledge there are no other "Learning to Learn ASL" courses available in any format. The curriculum is unique in that this class is designed to complement any existing ASL course. Students can enroll in this course prior to or concurrent with any other basic ASL or Deaf Studies course.

Targeted Learners

The introductory level of this course makes it ideal for any student interested in learning about ASL. At NTID this includes the entire student, faculty, and staff population. Given RIT's consideration of adopting NTID's incentive bonus for ASL proficiency, potentially all members of RIT faculty and staff are targeted learners. Once this course has been tested and revised, the population of potential learners will expand exponentially. As NTID/RIT increases its presence in the field of distance and online learning, more people from around the world will turn to us as a natural source of authoritative information on this topic.
Anticipated Impact on Teaching and Learning

Because ASL is a visual-gestural language, and because many ASL teachers are Deaf, it is common for the use of voice to be prohibited in the classroom. While this can accelerate receptive skill development, it can also inhibit students from employing the many sound strategies that students in other foreign languages use to good advantage.

The online environment will allow students to participate in written English, a mode that is unavailable to them in the classroom. This class will also benefit from the wide experience of the curriculum designers. The three principle designers have a combined 60-plus years of experience as ASL teachers. This experience allows them to isolate and identify the problem areas typical to ASL students, and to address these concerns in the most effective manner.

This approach is unique. To our knowledge there are no other “learning to learn ASL” courses available anywhere, in any format. Again, as NTID/RIT begins to assert its presence in the online arena, course offerings like this will position us as the leader in this vibrant market.

Measurement and Dissemination

We will evaluate this course by soliciting feedback from the students in a structured way on a regular basis. We will create a discussion group on Prometheus with the sole purpose of allowing students to give feedback on the lessons. Formative evaluations are a part of each module. Summative evaluations will be designed into the curriculum. We will invite participation and review from the leading experts of ASL instruction, both on this campus and nationally. We will also design a tracking system that codes students and monitors their success through their subsequent study of ASL.

After having reviewed the course and using the outcomes to perpetuate curriculum review and development, we intend to give a presentation to the campus advertising the availability of this learning opportunity.

Rationale for the Project

The Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Education at the National Technical Institute of the Deaf provides a state-of-the-art practical education in ASL instruction. This education affirms the essential role effective communication plays in bringing together Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people.

This course as proposed does not currently exist in our curriculum, at least as a separate course. Much of the material to be included in the course, however, does exist in varying forms among the disparate papers, lesson plans, and curriculum designs of the
development team. Working together, we propose to reorganize the extant material so that we can identify what is missing. Once we have done that assessment, we will script the approximately 8-10 modules, using the teaching materials we possess, and adding, revising, and creating as necessary.

Ready access to fundamental information about learning ASL has relevance to both college and institute priorities. NTID has led the way in recognizing the value of communication access across the spectrum of deaf and hearing community language preferences, and RIT has taken great strides to assure that all members of the campus community respect the diversity of language and communication choices available here. A learning opportunity such as we propose is a natural "next step" toward making RIT a more fully bilingual campus.

Timetable

July 1 – August 31
Principal Designer (Peterson) creates master schedule for Project, schedules studio time for video shoot, works with instructional designer from RIT’s online learning center, writes outlines for eight educational modules. Design Team (Peterson, Monikowski, Greer) meets for one week to divide workload and set format for modules.

Fall Quarter, 2002
Design Team writes modules. First module is produced, reviewed, and revised. All modules will be written and revised by the end of the quarter.

Winter Quarter, 02-03
Modules 2, 3, and 4 are produced, reviewed, and revised. Module 1 (and subsequent modules when ready) is disseminated internally for department review.

Spring Quarter, 2003
Modules 5, 6, 7, 8 are produced, reviewed, and revised and then presented to the department for internal review. Modules 1, 2, 3, and 4 go online, to be followed by the remaining units as they complete internal review. Course submitted to CAS and NTID Curriculum Committees.

Summer Quarter, 2003
Complete course is online and submitted for national review by selected experts in the field. Student evaluations are used for permanent course review. Coding system in place to track student success in downstream courses as well as pre- and post- measures of student achievement after implementation of this course.
Biographies of Design Team

Rico Peterson, CSC, MFA, Ph.D.

Currently the Chair of the Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, Peterson was a member of the National Theater of the Deaf for three years in the early 1970s. He performed the lead role in the National and International companies of the stage play Children of a Lesser God from 1980-83. Peterson received his Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in 1979, and has worked as an interpreter for 30 years in a wide variety of settings. He has considerable experience as a teacher, having taught at Gallaudet College, San Francisco State University, San Diego State University, Mesa College, and Riverside Community College in addition to NTID. He has also worked as a writer and/or translator for numerous Deaf theater, television, and educational video projects. His doctorate is in Education, with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction, from the University of California, Riverside. His research interests include second language learning by adults, language testing, and interaction in the language classroom.

Christine Monikowski Ph.D., CSC, ASLTA Professional

Christine Monikowski is an Assistant Professor in the Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of the Rochester Institute of Technology. She teaches courses in professional ethics, interpreting skills, and discourse analysis. Her Ph.D. is from the University of New Mexico (UNM) in Educational Linguistics. Her undergraduate degree (Secondary Education) is from Shippensburg State College in Pennsylvania. She has two Masters: one in Counseling from Gallaudet College and one in Linguistics from UNM. Dr. Monikowski has been a consultant and an instructor for the Educational Interpreting Certificate Program (October 1996 to August 1999), which provided online delivery of courses to interpreters in Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. She is currently an instructor for Project Teaching Interpreting Educators and Mentors/TIEM Online Master Mentor Program through the University of Colorado (funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant). Her areas of interest include second language acquisition, assessing language proficiency, and distance learning for interpreters and interpreter educators and she presents local and national workshops on these topics.
Leslie C. Greer, MA, CDI, ASLTA Professional

Leslie C. Greer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of American Sign Language and Interpreting Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of the Rochester Institute of Technology. She received her Master's degree in Linguistics at the University of Rochester. She holds Professional Certification from the national American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) and serves as ASLTA certification evaluator. She is currently serving as president of ASLTA. She received her Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. She is active in the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT). Leslie has traveled extensively in America, Europe and Asia and has presented numerous workshops on linguistics, methodology, language acquisition, sign language teaching and Deaf culture. She also is fluent in Japanese Sign Language (JSL).
Sample Lesson Plan for Introduction to Learning ASL.

Module: Comparative Language Features of English and ASL

All modules are divided into two sections. The first section treats factors that affect learning and offers alternative approaches to the topic. The second section offers content related to the topic in a schematic framework.

Objectives of this lesson:

- Students will learn strategies for approaching the study of grammar in the way that best suits their purpose and learning style.

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic terms and concepts related to the grammars of ASL and English.

- Students will synthesize information about topics relating to the use of grammar in language learning.

Lecture: The Grammar Game

The lecture explores the nature of grammar. What is it? How does it do what it does? How is it determined? Can grammar be taught? How is grammar best learned? How much grammar do you need to know?

Lewis’ (1986) conception of grammar: Grammar is not a rigid set of predictable rules. Rather, it is a dynamic overlapping of various subsets of particular instances (facts), structures that can be generalized (patterns), and individual styles (choices). Categorizing grammatical forms allows students to break down the study of grammar into manageable chunks.

How does the grammar of ASL compare to that of English? Parts of Speech, Parts of Sentences, Punctuation and Prosody, Grammar and Syntax.

Exercise

Parts of Speech, Parts of Sentences
Comparative Syntax
What do we know about grammar?
What do we need to know more about?
How can we proceed from here?

Suggested Readings
Funds can be used for release time, student workers, and for purchasing supplies and services (such as CD pressing, video production, digitizing, photography). Funds will generally not be available for activities consistent with normal college business, doctoral research, equipment purchase or travel (though the latter will be considered if a clear connection can be demonstrated between the project and a given conference or workshop).

### SALARIES:

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<td><strong>Faculty Compensation:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,900</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(College guidelines for adjunct teaching pay-scale should be used.)</td>
<td><strong>$428</strong></td>
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<td>If you are requesting adjunct faculty money, include 8% of the salary dollars requested to cover the associated benefits.</td>
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**Executive Producer**

**Producer/Director/Editor**

**Engineer**

**SALARIES TOTAL**

### MATERIALS:

- **Give kind, quantity, cost:**
  - Videotape $304

**MATERIALS TOTAL**

### SERVICES:

- **Educational Technology Center:**

**Other:**

- Studio Production $2,700
- Computer Rendering $4,850
- Editing $3,750

**SERVICES TOTAL** $11,490

**TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST** $28,492

### COLLEGE SUPPORT:

Support provided by college in addition to grant request, if applicable. (Explain)
## Estimate for Services

**By:** ITV @ NTID  
52 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623  
(716) 475-6581 (Voice/TTY)

**For:** Richard Smith  
NTID - Sign Language & Interpreting Education

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**Project Title:** Provost Grant  
**Description:** produce 8 - 20 min studio segments related to sign language instruction

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Videotape $304.00

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**Services** $11,400.00

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**Services** $11,400.00

**Total Price** $16,164.00

ITV Approval: ________________________________