

MODEL SIGN LANGUAGE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR
STUDENT TEACHER APPLICANTS

Frank Caccamise
October 2007 (3rd ed.)

Approved by:

Date approved:

PROGRAM student teacher applicants:

1. Must achieve an SLPI rating of Intermediate or Above (see Attachment 4, page 6) to student teach at PROGRAM.
2. May take the SLPI twice, once during their junior year and once during their senior year.
3. Are provided copies of Attachments 1-to-4 to this document prior to taking the SLPI (see pages 3-6).
4. Receive an SLPI results statement for each SLPI taken that states:
 - A. They have achieved an SLPI rating of Intermediate or Above and, therefore, have satisfied the SLPI requirement for student teaching at PROGRAM.

OR

 - B. They have not achieved an SLPI rating of Intermediate or Above and, therefore, have not satisfied the SLPI requirement for student teaching at PROGRAM.
5. May contact the PROGRAM SLPI Coordinator within four weeks of receiving their SLPI results to schedule an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting. Either the SLPI Coordinator, or another PROGRAM SLPI Team Member designated by the PROGRAM SLPI Coordinator, will meet with students to discuss (a) her/his sign language communication skills, and (b) suggestions for improving her/his sign language communication skills.

SLPI results for potential PROGRAM student teachers are shared:

1. With potential PROGRAM student teachers taking the SLPI, the Coordinator of their Deaf Education Program ,and other specified faculty member(s) specified by the college that each student is attending. The names of college officials who will receive SLPI results will be shared with potential PROGRAM student teachers prior to their taking the SLPI.
2. With other persons/programs only by written consent of potential PROGRAM student teacher applicants (see Attachment 5, page 7).

Use of SLPI videos for training, demonstration, and research:

When sharing results of an SLPI or during an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting, PROGRAM may request that students provide permission to use their SLPI videos for training, demonstration, and research. This is voluntary (see Attachment 6, page 8). If such permission has not been granted, potential PROGRAM student teachers' SLPI videos are automatically erased 6 months from interview dates. If permission given to use SLPI videos for training, demonstration, and research, videos maintained for a minimum of 6 months and then erased when no longer needed for these purposes.

Attachment 1

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW^a

Drs. Frank Caccamise and William Newell
May 2007

The SLPI, a conversational approach to sign language communication skills assessment, is based on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) (also known as the Language Proficiency Interview/LPI). Like the O/LPI, the SLPI permits interview content to vary according to the background, job responsibilities/schooling and other interests of each person interviewed. Consistent with the O/LPI, the goal of the SLPI is to assess how well people are able to use sign language for their communication needs, and, as appropriate, to assist people in development of their sign language communication skills.

The SLPI involves a one-to-one conversation between the interviewer and candidate/interviewee, with each interview recorded and subsequently rated independently by SLPI raters. [See Attachments 2 and 3 for SLPI candidate information and tips.] The basis for ratings is the SLPI Rating Scale (Attachment 4), a standard scale based on a highly skilled, knowledgeable native/native-like signer.

The SLPI-ASL assesses American Sign Language (ASL) as it is used among skilled sign language communicators in the United States. This use includes the full range of ASL from pure, linguistic descriptions of ASL to English-like contact signing. This full range is characterized by (a) meaning-based sign language vocabulary selection consistent with standardized signs in current use by skilled language users, and (b) a variety of grammatical features that are consistent with effective use of gestural-visual language for communication. These grammatical features include: (a) space, indexing, eye gaze, sign movement directionality, and body shifts to separate ideas and to identify and discuss persons, places, and objects present and not present; (b) classifiers for describing and representing persons, places, and objects and their movements (for example, use of the index finger to represent “a person”); (c) sign-word order which facilitates effective communication in gestural-visual language; and (d) facial expressions and other body movements (non-manual signals) to support and add to information communicated (for example, affirmative and negative head movements). In addition to vocabulary and grammatical features, clarity of sign production, fluency, and comprehension are important to effective communication when using a gestural-visual language, and therefore are considered in SLPI-ASL ratings. Further explanation of what is assessed by the SLPI is provided in the *SLPI Notebook, Section 5, Skills Important for Effective Sign Language Communication and SLPI-ASL Rating Levels*. Copies of this paper are available from your SLPI Coordinator.

As we have discussed consistently in SLPI presentations and published materials, follow-up is critical to successful use of the SLPI. Thus, SLPI candidates are encouraged to schedule SLPI Follow-Up Meetings. During follow-up meetings candidates have the opportunity to meet with sign language specialists to review and discuss their SLPI videos as a basis for planning skill development activities based on their individual communication skills and needs.

^aThe SLPI was referred to as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) from 1983 to May 2006.

Attachment 2

SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

1. We will have a conversation about social and work topics. I will ask you questions, and you may ask me questions.
2. We want to get the best sample of your American Sign Language (ASL) skills.
3. In order to elicit your best ASL skills, I may ask you to “re-sign” (restate) some responses.
4. We will evaluate your ASL skills, including: (a) ASL vocabulary; (b) clarity and control of sign production; (c) use of ASL grammar (for example, use of space, sign directionality, classifiers, time indicators, and sentence and discourse structure); (d) nonmanual behaviors such as facial expressions and body shifts; (e) fluency or smoothness of sign and fingerspelling production; and (f) comprehension (skill in receiving ASL).
5. Please try to maintain a good “signing posture;” that is, please sit upright. This should help you show your best ASL skills.6. Please answer my questions as completely as possible.

Do you have any questions? Please use ASL.

NOTE: PLEASE USE YOUR BEST ASL.

Attachment 3

SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

1. **RELAX:** Sip a cup of coffee, rub your hands, talk about the weather—anything that will help you to relax and be confident.
2. **RATE OF SIGNING:** Sign at a rate that is comfortable for you. If you know that you make many mistakes when you sign quickly, slow down.
3. **KEEP SIGNING:** Don't stop the conversation by answering simply YES or NO. Be generous. Give details, explain your point, develop your thoughts, and make comparisons. Anything that shows you can discuss a topic in depth will help you perform better. If you are not a "talkative" person by nature, you must make an extra effort to communicate during the interview.
4. **DON'T DOWNGRADE YOURSELF:** Don't apologize for your signing skills. Be positive. Let the interview show your skills.

WHAT TO DO...

1. **IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE:** If you know you made a mistake, correct it and continue. Correcting a mistake can help your performance.
2. **IF YOU ARE LOST IN A LONG EXPLANATION:** Stop. Think. Say something like, "Let me tell you again—it is complicated." Then try again. Don't worry about what happened. No one expects you to sign without mistakes.
3. **IF YOU BECOME NERVOUS DURING THE INTERVIEW:** The interviewer will know you are nervous and help you. You can stop for a few seconds and get control. Relax. Admit that you are nervous and joke about it. Often this is enough to make you comfortable again.
4. **IF SOMETHING IS INTERFERING WITH YOUR SIGNING:** If the air conditioner bothers you, say so. If you can't see the interviewer clearly, say so. Remember that this is your interview. You should have the best possible interview conditions.

Attachment 4

SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RATING SCALE^{a,b}

| <u>RATINGS</u> | <u>DESCRIPTORS^c</u> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Superior Plus</u> | <u>Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.</u> All aspects of signing are native-like. |
| <u>Superior</u> | <u>Able to have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.</u> Very broad sign language vocabulary, near native-like production and fluency, excellent use of sign language grammatical features, and excellent comprehension for normal signing rate. |
| <u>Advanced Plus</u> | <u>Exhibits some superior level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u>.</u> |
| <u>Advanced</u> | <u>Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics.</u> Broad sign language vocabulary knowledge and clear, accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near-normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate. |
| <u>Intermediate Plus</u> | <u>Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.</u> |
| <u>Intermediate</u> | <u>Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences.</u> Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproductions. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed. |
| <u>Survival Plus</u> | <u>Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u>.</u> |
| <u>Survival</u> | <u>Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length.</u> Some knowledge of basic sign language vocabulary with many sign vocabulary and/or sign production errors. Slow-to-moderate signing rate. Basic use of a few sign language grammatical features. Fair comprehension for signing produced at a slow-to-moderate rate with some repetition and rephrasing. |
| <u>Novice Plus</u> | <u>Exhibits some survival level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u>.</u> |
| <u>Novice</u> | <u>Able to provide single sign and some short phrase/sentence responses to basic questions signed at a slow-to-moderate rate with frequent repetition and rephrasing.</u> Vocabulary primarily related to everyday work and/or social areas such as basic work-related signs, family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time. Production and fluency characterized by many sign production errors and by a slow rate with frequent inappropriate pauses/hesitations. |
| <u>No Functional Skills</u> | <u>(May be) Able to provide short single sign and "primarily" fingerspelled responses to some basic questions signed at a slow rate with extensive repetition and rephrasing.</u> |

^aAdapted from US Foreign Service Institute and ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by Drs. William Newell and Frank Caccamise

^bThe SLPI was referred to as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) from 1983 to May 2006.

^cFor all SCPI rating descriptors, **first statement (in bold type) always a statement of ASL communicative functioning**, with all remaining statements (regular type) descriptors of ASL form (vocabulary, production, fluency, grammar, and comprehension).

Attachment 5

PROGRAM RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM FOR SHARING
SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RESULTS

I request that PROGRAM share results of my _____
month day year

SLPI with the following individuals/groups (please include addresses):

A.

B.

C.

D.

My signature below is my permission for PROGRAM to share my SLPI results as requested above.

Signature:

Date:

Please return this form to NAME, PROGRAM SLPI Coordinator, BLDG., Room #,
FAX #.

ATTACHMENT 6

PROGRAM PERMISSION TO USE SLPI VIDEO FOR
TRAINING, DEMONSTRATION, AND RESEARCH

Dear

In order to help ensure we are able to provide quality SLPI services, in-service training is provided for current PROGRAM SLPI Team Members, and training is sometimes necessary to add additional SLPI Team Members. In addition, persons who may/will be taking the SLPI often request the opportunity to see examples of signers who achieve each of the SLPI rating levels.

Given the above, we wish to request your permission to use your SLPI interview video to assist us in conducting SLPI training, demonstration, and research.

If you are willing to give us permission, please sign below and return this form to NAME, PROGRAM SLPI Coordinator, ROOM, BUILDING, FAX #. Thank you.

My signature below signifies my granting permission to use my MONTH DAY YEAR SLPI video for:

_____ training _____ demonstration _____ research

Signature:

Date: