SECTION 7

RESPONSES TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)

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April 24, 2012 (42d ed.)

The SLPI PAPERS in this document were initiated in April 1998 to provide responses to frequently asked questions about the SLPI. By November 1998 nine PAPERS had been written and shared with SLPI Coordinators and Team Members, but they had not been compiled in one place. In December 1999 in order to help ensure the availability of our responses to questions we developed this document. All *SLPI Notebook* documents referred to in the SLPI PAPERS listed below are included in the SLPI website: www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi. Information that addresses additional questions about the SLPI may be found in the Forum part of this website.

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SLPI PAPER #1: SLPI NOTEBOOK MATERIALS

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September 2011 (25th edition)

Introduction

This PAPER provides an overview of *SLPI Notebook (NB)* materials and documents for potential and current Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Team Members and an overview of documents important for people who take the SLPI. These materials and documents are included in the Resources for Evaluators part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi. Since our application of the SLPI has primarily been for assessment of American Sign Language (ASL) in the United States and Canada several SLPI materials and documents specify SPLI-ASL. If the SLPI is applied for assessing a sign language other than ASL these materials and documents need to be modified to reflect this. SLPI PAPERS#3 and #4 in *SLPI NB S7* provide further discussion of this.

Discussion of *SLPI Notebook (NB)* Materials and Documents

White and Blue Two-Sided Laminated Pages

  February 2008 and September 2011Updates

  A. Two-sided white laminated page with SLPI Rating Scale on one side and SLPI: Analyzing Function on the other side; updates for this page include the following:

    1. The SLPI Rating Scale [June 2006 (revised edition)] includes the addition of "generally" in functional descriptor for Advanced Rating: that is "generally shared conversation". Suggested by a Rochester School for the Deaf SLPI Workshop participant, this addition appropriately describes functioning of Advanced level signers. Also, the Intermediate Rating functional descriptor now includes the phrase "generally 3-to-5 sentences" and form categories are now in the same order for all rating level descriptors and they are in the same order that they occur on SLPI Rater Worksheets and the blue laminated page form entitled "Some Guidelines for Identifying and Discussing ASL Grammar". (Note: SLPI PAPERS #3 and #4 discuss how to properly label the SLPI Rating Scale when implementing SLPI use for assessing a specified sign language.)

    2. SLPI Analyzing Function (May 2007 edition) includes the same changes made to the first line functional descriptors in the SLPI Rating Scale. Also, minor wording changes have been made to Sense of Sharedness/Spontaneity to more clearly state that the main difference between No Functional Skills and Novice is related to comprehension.

  B. Two-sided blue laminated page with Analyzing Form on one side and Some Guidelines for Identifying and Discussing ASL Grammar on the other side:

    1. SLPI Analyzing Form (August 2009) - Based on a form developed by Charlene Crump, State Coordinator, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Interpreting/ Communication Access, the Analyzing Form side of page has been modified to show the form descriptors for vocabulary knowledge, production, fluency/rate, grammar, and comprehension for each SLPI rating. This allows raters to more easily compare their judgments of form to the SLPI Rating Scale. In addition, "number equivalents" for a "few, some, several, and many" are provided in a footnote.

2. Grammatical features listed on Some Guidelines for Identifying and Discussing ASL Grammar (August 2009) sheet are in same order as listing of grammatical features on SLPI Rater Worksheets. In addition, references to writing guidelines and examples in *SLPI NB* Sections 4A and 4B have been added.

S1: Workshop (WS) Goal and SLPI Principles, Materials, and Procedures

February 2008 Update

S1, the primary document used during SLPI Training Workshops, includes workshop goals, discussion of the importance of both **function** and **form** to SLPI ratings, and the importance of focusing on **function** prior to considering **form**.

S2: SLPI Training Workshop Schedule and In-Service Materials

February 2008 Update

S2 is the workshop schedule for training potential SLPI Team Members and materials for in-service workshops for current SLPI Team Members may be placed in S2.

S3A: SLPI Scheduling and Interviewing

February 2008 Update

S3A provides guidelines for scheduling and conducting SLPI interviews. All programs use this document as is except for minor edits, including identifying people other than candidates that receive copies of SLPI appointment memorandums.

Note: Special attention should be given to proper angle when one camera is used for recording SLPI interviews. For discussion of this in *SLPI NB* S7 see SLPI PAPER #6: *Angles and Other SLPI Recording Guidelines*. Examples of pre-interview forms for SLPI candidates are included in *SLPI NB* S9B: *MODEL PROGRAM Staff Sign Language Communication Philosophy and Policy: Procedures for Implementation*.

February 2010 Update

 A. S3A refers to forms in S9B – Since S9B has been updated with page changes, references in S3A to pages in S9B were updated.

B. For Appendix B that addresses interviewing materials, equipment, room set-up, and recording materials –
   1. 1st page information has been updated and reference to *SLPI NB* Section 7 PAPER #6, *Angles and Other SLPI Recording Guidelines*, added.
   2. 2nd page, Guidelines for Recording SLPI Interviews, has been deleted.

C. Interviewee" changed back to "candidate" throughout document for consistency with other SLPI documents (this has been done for all updated documents).

D. Deleted rater information not appropriate for "Appendix E, The Importance of SLPI Interviews to the SLPI Rating Process".

S3B: SLPI Rating and Sharing Results   Procedures

February 2008 Update

There are three model Section 3B documents that may be adapted for use in accordance with the rating and sharing of results procedure selected. The three SLPI rating and sharing of results procedure options described in these documents are the SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure, the SLPI Two Rater and Follow-UP Meeting Procedure, and the SLPI Three Rater Team and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure. All three procedures place an emphasis on follow-up meetings for providing SLPI candidates with information about their sign language communication skills. For discussion of the three SLPI rating and sharing of results procedures options, see S7 SLPI PAPER #9: *Options for Conducting and Sharing Results of SLPI Ratings.* Examples of forms for sharing results with SLPI candidates, including results memorandums, are included in Section 9B: *MODEL PROGRAM Staff Sign Language Communication Philosophy and Policy: Procedures for Implementation.*

February 2010 Update

Section 3B for Individual Rater Procedure (February 2010)

A. S3B refers to forms in Model S9B – As stated above, since S9B has been updated with page changes, references in S3B to pages in S9B were updated.

B. ASL added to SLPI on title page (SLPI: ASL) and other pages as appropriate.

C. Added raters are informed of "official" results (see Note 1, p.3)

D. Added an optional feedback form for SLPI Follow-Up Meeting (p.15)

E. Moved Appendix C ("SLPI Rating Procedure Steps etc.") to last form under Appendix A: SLPI Rating Forms and made significant edits to this form

F. Interviewee" changed back to "candidate" throughout document for consistency with other SLPI documents.

G. Deleted Rater Discussion Worksheet - Saves on paper work and time

Note: In a previous update (October 2009) the Individual Rater Worksheet was updated with the major change being that grammar descriptors were changed to be more consistent with the blue laminated grammar page. Also, "candidate" was added to 4A, B, C, D, and E to help distinguish between interviewer and candidate. We wish to thank our North Carolina colleagues, including Keith Cagle and Sharon Hurley, for suggestions that led to these improvements.

Section 3B for Two Rater Procedure (February 2010) and Section 3B for Three Rater Procedure (February 2010) – See #3 above with the exception of #3G.

April 2011 Update

Updated procedures and forms for SLPI Follow-Up Meetings have been included in all S3B documents. The new procedures and forms are designed to provide candidates attending follow-up meetings with written priority recommendations for their ASL skills development/improvement. The new follow-up meeting forms include a priority

recommendations checklist and sample recommendations that provide examples of how recommendations may be written in a manner specific to each candidate.

S4A: SLPI Rater Worksheet Samples

February 2008 Update

S4A provides completed SLPI Rater Worksheet samples. These samples may be used to assist SLPI Raters in developing their skills in providing general descriptors and form examples on their SLPI Rater Worksheets. There are two versions of S4A, one for the SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure and the other for both the SLPI Three and Two Rater Team and Follow-Up Meeting Procedures.

February 2010 Update

S4A: SLPI ASL Two and Three Rater Procedures' Rater Worksheet (WS) Samples (February 2010): Added ASL to title, added information about reporting ratings as ranges to introduction, made several edits to improve form examples, and corrected a few errors. Also, for all samples replaced old discussion WS with new discussion WS included in February 2010 S3B for Two and Three Rater Procedures. This means individual and discussion rater WSs now match thus making it easier to transfer information from individual to discussion WSs.

March 2010 Update

S4A: SLPI ASL Individual Rater Procedure Rater Worksheet (WS) Samples (March 2010): Changes made similar to those made for S4A: SLPI ASL Two and Three Rater Procedures' Rater Worksheet (WS) Samples (February 2010) – See above.

September 2011 Note: When SLPI is used to assess a sign language other than ASL, SLPI materials and documents should be changed to reflect this.

S4B: Guidelines for Completing SLPI Rater Worksheets

February 2008 Update
S4B provides guidelines for completing SLPI Rater Worksheets and guidelines for SLPI Team Members and SLPI Coordinators to use when reviewing completed SLPI Rater Worksheets.

February 2010 Update
Changes made to be consistent with changes made to S3A and S3B documents (February 2010 versions) and some edits made to improve ease of readability.

S5: Skills Important for Effective Sign Language Communication and SLPI Rating Levels

February 2008 Update
S5 discusses the importance of communicative functioning and linguistic form to effective sign language communication and, therefore, to SLPI ratings. Included in this discussion are the concepts of formal/rhetorical language norms and communicative norms and the importance of these concepts to the assessment of ASL skills. In addition, superior/native-like signers, advanced signers, and skill level standards are discussed.

S6: American Sign Language (ASL) Grammar

> February 2008 Update

> S6 provides a listing and examples of ASL grammatical features. The order of the features on pages 1-2 of S6 is consistent with the order of these features on SLPI Rater Worksheets and on Some Guidelines for Identifying and Discussing ASL Grammar (one side of blue laminated page).

S7: Responses to Frequently Asked Questions about the SLPI

> February 2008 Update

> S7 consists of a series of PAPERS that provide responses to most frequently asked questions about the SLPI.

> April 2010 Update

> Changes made to several PAPERS to be consistent with changes made in February and March 2010 to *SLPI NB* materials and to be consistent with information in www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi. (Note: This SLPI website now includes a FAQ part that refers to several papers in S7.

> January 2011 Update

> Responses to additional questions about the SLPI are included in the recently added www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi FORUM part.

> September 2011 Update

> Changes made to several PAPERS, including how to label SLPI Rating Scale to specify specific sign language being assessed (see PAPERS #3 and #4).

S8: Selected Readings for the SLPI

> February 2008 Update

> S8 includes selected readings for the SLPI organized under six topic areas: (a) Language Function and Form, (b) SLPI Development and Use, (c) Assessing Students' Sign Language Skills and ASL Assessment Options, (d) Observation of Sign Language in Classroom Settings, (e) Interpreter Evaluations and the SLPI, and (f) Language/Oral Proficiency Interview Readings. The information in areas "a" and "b" together with that in S1, S5, and S6, explain why both **function** and **form** are critical concepts for the SLPI. Area "f" readings discuss the L/OPI, the spoken language assessment tool upon which the SLPI is based. In area "f" the by article by Protase Woodford discusses implications of foreign language testing for ASL.

S9A-through-S9E: (Suggested) Documents for Development by Programs Using the SLPI

February 2008 Update

S9A-through-S9E provide five MODEL documents important for people taking the SLPI:

S9A: Staff/Employee Sign Language Communication Philosophy and Policy or Interim Plan for SLPI Use
S9B: Procedures for Implementing Staff/Employee Sign Language Policy
Note: Some programs include policy and procedures in the same document.
S9C: Student Teacher and Intern Applicant Sign Language Policy and Procedures
S9D: Community/External Group Sign Language Services Policy and Procedures
S9E: Annual Sign Language Program Reports

S9A and S9B provide persons taking the SLPI with information relevant to why they are taking the SLPI and with information to help prepare for their taking the SLPI.
S9C and S9D serve the same purposes as S9A and S9B for student teacher applicants, intern applicants, and community/external groups and individuals.
S9E reports SLPI services and results on an annual basis; information in this section may be used to help determine the fairness of sign language entry skill levels, sign language standards/goals, and timelines for achieving standards/goals.

February 2010 Update

Section 9B: MODEL PROGRAM Staff ASL Policy: Procedures for Implementation (February 2010) – Changes made include use of ASL Program in place of SLPI to emphasize that ASL Programs generally include ASL skills development as well as assessment, increased use of ASL, and updating of several forms.

January 1, 2011 Update

Both model and sample documents for the above suggested sections are available in the Resources for SLPI: ASL Evaluators part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi

Section 10: Connecting American Sign Language (ASL) Instruction and the SLPI

February 2008 Update

This document is intended to assist schools and other agencies that have implemented SLPI use within the context of an integrated ASL communication skills assessment-development program to connect SLPI results to ASL instruction. In addition to general suggestions for accomplishing this, it includes an overview of NTID ASL courses that are based on SLPI results for NTID faculty and staff and an in depth description of a Pennsylvania School for the Deaf sign language course for SLPI Intermediate/ Intermediate Plus signers. Also, resources for ASL instruction and Deaf culture materials are provided.

February 2010 Update
Updates made to information about ASL curriculum and Deaf culture distributors and materials and refinements made to suggestions for connecting ASL instruction to SLPI results.

SLPI PAPER #2: WHAT IS THE SLPI RATING SCALE?

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September 2011 (4th edition)

Based on highly skilled, knowledgeable native-like signers the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale is a standard scale for rating sign language communication skills. Since each SLPI candidate's performance is compared to this standard scale, not other candidates, the SLPI is a criterion-referenced test. Also, since the upper anchor for the SLPI Rating Scale is skilled native-like signers the SLPI Rating Scale may be applied to all natural sign languages. (Note: For further discussion of this see SLPI PAPER #3, *What Does the SLPI Assess?*)

As discussed in Newell, Caccamise, Boardman, and Holcomb (1983) and SLPI PAPER #4, *SLPI-SCPI-SLPI History,* the SLPI was adapted from the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), an assessment tool that is designed to assess spoken language skills in second languages. Since the L/OPI was developed by the US federal government to assess current and potential government employees' spoken language communication skills for foreign languages, the original L/OPI rating scale, the US Government Defense Language Institute (DLI) L/OPI Rating Scale, was more sensitive at higher spoken language communication skill levels than lower skill levels. Subsequent to the development and application of the L/OPI to foreign services assessment needs interest grew for applying this assessment technique within academic settings. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) secured two U. S. Department of Education grants and, in collaboration with Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, developed an L/OPI scale for use in academic settings. This new scale was labeled the ACTFL/ETS L/OPI Rating Scale. Since foreign language instruction generally results in skills at the lower spoken communication language skill levels, the ACTFL/ETS L/OPI Rating Scale was constructed to be more sensitive at these lower spoken language communication skill levels and less sensitive at the higher skill levels than the DLI L/OPI Rating Scale (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982).

Considering that the SLPI was projected to be used with people who are native signers and with people who are learning a sign language as a second language, it was determined that the SLPI Rating Scale would need to be sensitive to the full range of possible sign language communication skills from very low, beginning skills through native-like skills. Therefore, as shown on the next page the SLPI Rating Scale includes eleven rating skills levels that cover a wide range of sign language communication skills from No Functional Skills (low beginning skills) at the low end of the scale up to Superior Plus (native-like skills) at the top end of the scale. Each rating level has a functional communication descriptor and linguistic form descriptors. The functional descriptors identify the highest levels at which candidates are able to use sign language for communication and the form descriptors identify candidates' sign language vocabulary, production, fluency, grammar, and comprehension skills.

References

Liskin-Gasparro, J. (Ed.) (1982). *Foreign Language & Proficiency Assessment*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Newell, W., Caccamise, F., Boardman, K., & Holcomb, B. R. (1983). Adaptation of the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) for assessing sign communicative competence. *Sign Language Studies*, *41*, 311-352.

SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RATING SCALE[a, b]

RATINGS	DESCRIPTORS[c]
Superior Plus	**Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** All aspects of signing are native-like.
Superior	**Able to have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Advanced	**Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate	**Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences.** 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.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival	**Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length.** 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.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Novice	**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.** 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.
No Functional Skills	**(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.**

_____

[a]Adapted from US Foreign Service Institute AND ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by William Newell and Frank Caccamise
[b]The SLPI was referred to as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) from 1983 to May 2006.
[c]For all SLPI rating descriptors, **first statement (in bold type) always a statement of sign language communicative functioning,** with all remaining statements (regular type) descriptors of sign language form (vocabulary, production, fluency, grammar, and comprehension).

June 2006 (revised edition)

SLPI INFORMATION #3: WHAT DOES THE SLPI ASSESS?

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September 2011 (10th edition)

As described in PAPER #4 (*SLPI-SCPI-SLPI History*) in this document The Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) has been adapted from the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI). Given that the SLPI Rating Scale is anchored at the highest level (Superior Plus) by native/native-like sign language users, similar to the L/OPI that may be used to assess a variety of spoken languages (for example, French, German, and Japanese) the SLPI may be used to assess a variety of sign languages; for example, French, German and American Sign Language (ASL). Therefore, when the SLPI is used to assess American Sign Language (ASL), the SLPI Rating Scale may be properly termed the "Sign Language Proficiency Interview Rating Scale– American Sign Language (ASL)" (see next page of this PAPER).

Our application of the SLPI has allowed for assessment of ASL from a broad perspective as it is used among skilled sign language communicators in the United States and Canada. This use includes the full range of ASL from pure, linguistic descriptions of ASL to English-like contact signing. Expanding upon this, *SLPI Notebook (NB)* Sections 1, 5, and 8 discuss and support the importance of both communicative **functioning** and linguistic **form** to the SLPI, considering in this discussion the concepts of rhetorical and communicative language norms. As stressed in *SLPI NB* Section 5 (page 1), "The rhetorical norm represents an idealized form of a language...The rhetorical norm is generally not the 'standard' for everyday communication of skilled language users. The communicative norm is found in the every day communication of skilled language users. Among users of a language there is generally greater variation in their use when communication (not linguistic form) is their goal."

Also, as discussed in *SLPI NB* Section 5 natural sign language in the United States has acceptable variations, and these variations include English influenced contact signing:

> ASL and English have been in contact in the United States for more than 150 years. Due to this contact, as has been documented in the sign language literature, ASL has been influenced by English and English-like signing has developed to include many features of ASL. Haugen (1977) noted that, when there is an intermingling of two languages in contact, the concept of "language norm" is "highly ambiguous and slippery". He further stated, "We have to recognize that the communicative norm which grows up in a bilingual community is more elastic and less predictable than that of a monolingual community" (p. 98). Given the above, it can be expected that the communicative norm for ASL use in the United States will reflect mixtures and borrowings between the two languages in contact (that is, between ASL and English).

The above is one of the major reasons that we support training local people to conduct SLPI assessments. Local skilled ASL users are able to use their knowledge and intuitions about both national and local standards of what is acceptable for ASL communication as they conduct SLPI interviews and ratings. Further support for local SLPI training and implementation is provided in SLPI PAPER #12, *Support for Local SLPI Teams and SLPI Team Training*.

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RATING SCALE–
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)[a,]**

RATINGS	DESCRIPTORS[c]
Superior Plus	**Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** All aspects of signing are native-like.
Superior	**Able to have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Advanced	**Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate	**Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences.** 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.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival	**Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length.** 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.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Novice	**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.** 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.
No Functional Skills	**(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.**

[a]Adapted from US Foreign Service Institute AND ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by William Newell and Frank Caccamise.

[b]The SLPI was referred to as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) from 1983 to May 2006.

[c]For all SLPI 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).

June 2006 (revised edition)

SLPI PAPER #4: SLPI-SCPI-SLPI HISTORY

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September 2011 (9th edition)

We originally labeled our adaptation of the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI) for assessing sign language communication skills as the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI). As discussed below this was changed to the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) in 1983. Given the history of our sign language assessment tool and current circumstances in the area of sign language assessment, in May 2006 we decided to return to our original title; that is, SLPI. Therefore, throughout this paper we refer to the assessment tool we have developed as the SLPI recognizing that it was referred to as the SCPI from 1983 to May 2006.

As discussed in the first edition of this paper in the late 1990s questions arose about the history of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI); for example, Who developed this assessment tool? and Where was it developed? What follows is the history of this assessment tool from our experiences and perspective.

As discussed in our first publication on adapting the L/OPI for assessing sign Language communication skills (Newell, Caccamise, Boardman, & Holcomb, 1983), in 1980 Protase Woodford from Educational Testing Services (ETS) presented information about the L/OPI at the Third National Symposium on Sign Language Research and Teaching in Boston (Woodford, 1982). As Woodford discussed the L/OPI, an interview format based assessment tool, was developed by the US federal government after World War II in response to a need to have an assessment tool that could be used to assess current and potential government employees' spoken communication skills for a variety of foreign languages. Based on Woodford's presentation several individuals began to explore the application of interview techniques to the assessment of American Sign Language (ASL), including faculty from the College of Staten Island, Gallaudet University (then Gallaudet College), and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

In 1982 four NTID faculty members, Keitha Boardman, Barbara Ray Holcomb, and the two of us attended an ETS L/OPI Training Workshop in Princeton, NJ. As this training workshop we observed L/OPI assessments for French and Spanish and, with guidance from ETS staff we practiced applying L/OPI interviewing techniques to ASL. Later that year we presented our first training workshop on our L/OPI adaptation for assessing ASL, the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI), at the Louisiana School for the Deaf (Caccamise, Newell, & Mitchell-Caccamise, 1983).

During 1980-82 we were aware that other people were investigating application of the L/OPI to sign language assessment and we visited Will Madsen and Catherine Moses who were conducting this work at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) and Will Madsen visited us at NTID. We discussed the similarities and differences between our work and shared materials and procedural information. In 1983 Mary Mosleh from the College of Staten Island, who was conducting similar efforts, organized a meeting to bring together people who were involved and interested in applying L/OPI techniques to assessing sign language communication skills. People attending this meeting at ETS in Princeton, NJ included Carol Lazoriak, William R. Gut, and Mary Mosleh, College of Staten Island, Will Madsen and Catherine Moses,

Gallaudet College, Ted Supalla, University of Illinois, William Tomes, South Carolina Personnel Division, and Keith Boardman and the two of us, NTID. In Caccamise et al. (1983) we discussed the meeting at ETS stating that persons attending this meeting suggested renaming the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale (published in Newell et al., 1983) the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) Rating Scale. It was agreed that this would be the rating scale used by all in attendance as each of us continued our work to apply L/OPI techniques to the assessment of sign language and we agreed that we would continue to share our efforts and to collaborate whenever possible.

For a variety of reasons, however, we were soon working independently. Therefore, although subsequent development of the SCPI (as it was labeled at that time) by Will Madsen and Catherine Moses at Gallaudet College and by us at NTID shared a common base (the L/OPI) and a common rating scale developed by us, methodological differences in terms of both materials and procedures developed over time. In considering this it is important to appreciate that some methodological variations are allowable for the L/OPI. Therefore, some differences between the SCPI as it evolved and was applied by Gallaudet College faculty following our 1983 meeting and the sign language interview assessment that we continued to develop and apply may be accounted for by decisions as to the best L/OPI methodological variations upon which to base an adaptation for assessing sign language communication skills.

In addition to the sign language interview assessments developed at Gallaudet and by us other sign language assessment tools have been labeled as the ASL Proficiency Interview (ASLPI). The first ASLPI was a direct adaptation from the L/OPI by Mel Carter when he was working at California State University at Northridge in the 1980s. Another use of the ASLPI label during the 1990s was by Ed Rogers, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, California Department of Rehabilitation, who, in consultation with one of the authors of this paper (Frank Caccamise), adapted the SLPI for use with California vocational rehabilitation personnel. The most recent use of the ASLPI label to our knowledge was announced in a May 17, 2006 memorandum from Dr. Thomas Allen, Dean, Gallaudet University Center for American Sign Language Literacy (CASLL), in which he addressed a change from the SCPI as it evolved at Gallaudet University to the GU-ASLPI:

> Recently, CASLL introduced the GU-ASLPI as the primary means for measuring ASL proficiency of individuals throughout the campus who are not faculty members....The GU-ASLPI is a refinement of the ASLPI that is in use in an increasing number of programs throughout the United States.

Dr. Allen provided several reasons for this change, including:

> The GU-ASLPI has a specific target language (ASL) and therefore is more appropriately modeled after the LPI administered by the US Foreign Service to credential Federal employees assigned to foreign countries.
> The SCPI, over the years, has BECOME a measure of ASL, so a refocusing of its name and scoring procedures is overdue.

We agree that specifying a specific target language is helpful when applying L/OPI adaptations to assessing sign language communication skills. Since across the US and in Canada the SLPI has been implemented in order to assess ASL from a broad perspective as it is used among skilled sign language communicators in the United States and Canada we now label this

application of the L/OPI to assessing sign language communication skills as the SLPI–American Sign Language (ASL). As discussed in several of our SLPI documents, including SLPI PAPER #3, *What Does the SLPI Assess*, 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 communicators, and (b) a variety of grammatical features that are consistent with effective use of gestural/visual language for communication.

Naturally if the SLPI is used to assess sign languages other than ASL this should be specified similar to applications of the L/OPI for different spoken languages. For example, the SLPI could be applied to Japanese Sign Language (JSL) and could then be designated as the SLPI-Japanese Sign Language (JSL). The SLPI has been adopted by the US Peace Corps for assessment of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL), and this application could be labeled the SLPI-Kenyan Sign Language (KSL).

We respect the work of our colleagues and we encourage people to contact them, as well as us, to learn about options for assessing sign language skills. As we stated in our first SLPI publication (Newell et al., 1983) in response to two reviews:

> ...application of the LPI to sign evaluation is in its infant stages, and we have much to learn about its potential strengths and limitations for assessment of sign communication....Through continued cooperative efforts, supportive critique, and sharing of experiences, the appropriate issues raised by reviewers will be addressed. What we and others must keep in perspective is that communication is what is most important.

We have continued our efforts to apply LPI techniques from its infant stages to the level of making a significant difference in the quality of communication and services provided by academic, vocational rehabilitation, and other professionals working with students, clients, and our colleagues who are D/deaf and hard-of-hearing. We have learned much in our efforts through collaboration with our colleagues at more than 50 academic and vocational rehabilitation programs across the United States and in Canada and Kenya, Africa. Hopefully our efforts, and those of our colleagues who are engaged in developing other assessment tools for sign language skills, will be discussed and applied in a manner that recognizes that *communication* is what is most important.

By whom and where was the SLPI developed? For us the SLPI developed through (1) careful study of the L/OPI literature, (2) discussion with L/OPI professionals, (3) participation in a L/OPI training workshop, (4) participation in a stimulating and informative meeting with our colleagues at ETS in 1983 to discuss application of L/OPI techniques to sign language assessment, and (5) since 1982 more than 70 SLPI Training/In-Service workshop training experiences across the United States, in Canada, and in Kenya, Africa.

For a history and perspective on the development of both the sign language instrument labeled as the SCPI as it evolved at Gallaudet University and the GU-ASLPI we encourage you to contact Gallaudet University. Also, information about the ASLPI and its' use at California State University Northridge is available at the following website: www.csun.edu/~speddhh/aslpi.htm. In addition we encourage you to learn about other sign language communication assessment tools that may serve your needs; for example, see SLPI PAPER #14, *Sign Language Assessment of Students and ASL Assessment Options*.

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SLPI PAPER #5: SLPI TRAINING WORKSHOP AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011(17th edition)

Introduction

Detailed information about planning SLPI workshops is included in a paper entitled *SLPI Training Workshop: Planning, Implementation, and Follow-Up* (Frank Caccamise & William Newell, 2008, May). This document is available in the Resources for Evaluators part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

The information below addresses SLPI Workshops for training potential SLPI Team Members and SLPI In-Service Workshops for current SLPI Team Members. Suggestions for local programs to provide the training needed to add members to their SLPI Teams are provided in SLPI PAPER #11: *Adding SLPI Team Members.*

Four-Day SLPI Training Workshops

1.   Six to Ten Participants: See SLPI PAPER #13, *Why 6-to-10 SLPI Training Workshop Participants?*

2.   Workshop Feasibility: Determine feasibility of conducting SLPI Training Workshop considering various factors including goal(s) of SLPI use and program resources (see SLPI PAPER #17: *Factors Important to Development of Sign Language Program Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents.*

3.   Workshop Expenses: For two trainers travel expenses, meals, two hotel rooms, rental car, airport parking, tips, baggage, miscellaneous, and a consulting fee. A sample contract letter is included in the workshop planning paper referred to in the Introduction to this PAPER.

4.   Pre-Workshop Services - Includes assistance with:

   A.   Developing PROGRAM SLPI interim use plan or updating sign language program policies and procedures that guide SLPI use
   B.   Developing workshop schedule
   C.   Selecting workshop participants
   D.   Equipment and room needs
   E.   Preparing materials and scheduling SLPI workshop interviews including information to be shared with persons taking SLPI during workshop
   F.   Preparing *SLPI Notebooks* and other workshop materials (each participant receives a notebook at beginning of workshop training)

5.   Pre-Workshop Services On-Site - Includes pre-workshop meeting with program SLPI Coordinator(s) (and other program personnel if appropriate) to check training rooms, to make a final check on workshop materials and schedule, and to discuss factors to consider in implementing and monitoring SLPI use.

6.   Conduct SLPI Training Workshop over four days for 6 to 10 potential SLPI Team Members.

7. Post-Workshop Services:

    A. Rate workshop participants' SLPI interviews as appropriate and make recommendations for PROGRAM SLPI Team.

    B. Provide advisement for policies and procedures that guide SLPI use and advisement for annual Sign Language Program reports. Annual reports provide information important -

        1) To monitoring sign language program effectiveness

        2) To planning staff sign language communication skills development program options

        3) To planning in-service training for SLPI Team Members

        4) To identifying program modifications that may be appropriate including skill level standards/goals, timelines for achieving standards/goals and skill levels required and preferred at job entry (hire, promotion, and transfer).

    For sample and model sign language program policy, procedures, and annual report documents see Policies, Procedures & Research part in http://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

<center>SLPI Follow-Up Consulting Services</center>

Additional consulting services relative to sign language assessment and skills development may be appropriate; for example:

1. Two Day In-Service Workshops for Current SLPI Team Members: For two trainers travel expenses, meals, two hotel rooms, rental car, airport parking, tips, baggage, miscellaneous, and a consulting fee. In-service workshops may include -

    A. Feedback and refinement for SLPI interviewing skills.

    B. Refinement and re-calibration of SLPI rating skills to support consistent and appropriate interpretation of the SLPI Rating Scale; this is important to ensuring fair ratings and is consistent with what is recommended for Language/Oral Proficiency Interview Raters. (LPI/OPI literature recommends "re-calibration" in-service training for LPI/OPI Raters every 2-to-3 years.)

    C. Sharing SLPI results and connecting SLPI to sign language communication skills development.

    D. Discussion of policies and procedures documents that guide SLPI use and Annual Sign Language Program Reports.

    E. Support for SLPI Coordinators to provide in-service for current SLPI Team Members and mentoring for potential SLPI Team Members.

2. Review of SLPI Ratings

3. Review of SLPI Interviewer Skills

4. Workshop for American Sign Language (ASL) Instructors: Focus on connecting SLPI results to planning ASL communication skill development (strategies and options for developing ASL communication skills); see *SLPI Notebook Section 10: Connecting ASL Instruction and the SLPI.*

SLPI INFORMATION #6: ANGLES AND OTHER SLPI RECORDING GUIDELINES

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
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September 2011 (10th edition)

SLPI Notebook (NB) Section 3A includes guidelines for scheduling and conducting SLPI interviews.

This SLPI PAPER addresses angles and other recording guidelines for SLPI interviews when one camera is used (not split screen with two cameras) in order to help ensure SLPI Raters have the view necessary to fairly rate and describe each SLPI candidate's sign language communication skills.

Based on our review of SLPI videos from several programs there seems to be a tendency to angling the camera in order to have an "equally" clear view of both the interviewer and the candidate. In addition there is often open space off the shoulder of candidates' non-dominant signing hands and too much space above their heads. However, with one camera a nearly equal or equal view of both interviewers and candidates makes it difficult to clearly see candidates' signing, especially their fingerspelling, non-manual signals, and use of space. Thus, rating candidates becomes difficult and possibly unfair.

For single camera recording the interviewer and candidate should sit facing one another with camera placed to capture side view of interviewer and nearly frontal view of candidate and angled to allow for clear view of candidate's dominant hand palm (see Diagrams 1 and 2 below). With proper single camera placement it will appear that the camera is focused on candidate with a nearly frontal view but slightly angled for clearer view of palm side of candidate's dominant signing hand. The camera 'shoots' over interviewer's shoulder at approximately a 45 degree angle with view of candidate as large and tight to shoulder of non-dominant sign hand as possible; that is, no "open" space between shoulder of non-dominant signing hand and view of candidate on monitor with minimal space above head of candidate.

DIAGRAMS FOR RECORDING SLPI INTERVIEWS: ONE CAMERA

<table>
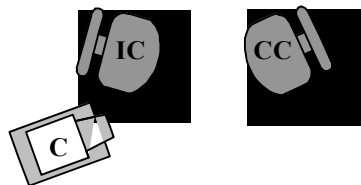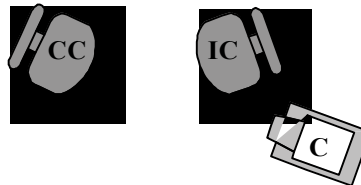<tr><td>DIAGRAM 1
For Right Handed Dominant Signer</td><td>DIAGRAM 2
For Left Handed Dominant Signer</td></tr>
</table>

Key: CC = Candidate's Chair   IC = Interviewer's Chair   C = Camera

To help ensure continued use of proper recording angles we recommend the following:

1. Most important SLPI Coordinators should periodically check SLPI recordings in order to ensure proper recorder angles are being used.

2. SLPI Coordinators or someone designated by them should mark proper locations in interviewing rooms for recording equipment and chairs considering both right and left handed dominant signers. When marking proper locations persons should be seated in both interviewer and candidate chairs and they should look at one another, not the camera.

    Note: Although chairs generally need to be placed in close proximity it is important to ensure proper personal signing space is maintained between candidate and interviewer. In order to allow proper use of the signing space chairs with no arms and no rollers should be used.

3. A sample recording should be produced showing the proper set-up for SLPI recording rooms and this should be reviewed periodically by all SLPI Team Members and persons responsible for setting-up SLPI recordings rooms and equipment. It may be appropriate to review this sample recording at an annual SLPI Team meeting at the beginning of each assessment year/cycle. SLPI Team Members may not be responsible for setting-up interview recording rooms but they should be knowledgeable about proper interview room set-up and they should request adjustments in set-up when appropriate. Also, SLPI recordings that candidates have given permission to use for training may be used as samples to show proper recording angles and improper recording angles for SLPI interviews. (In *SLPI NB* S3A see form entitled "Permission to Use SLPI Videos for Training, Demonstration, and Research.")

One other suggestion - SLPI videos should be rewound at the end of all recording and rating sessions.

SLPI PAPER #7: FLUCTUATIONS IN SLPI RESULTS

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (12th edition) Introduction

Several SLPI Coordinators and Team Members have shared with us the frustration and concern experienced by some people when their most recent SLPI results are lower than previous results. The purpose of this SLPI PAPER, therefore, is to address reasons why such fluctuations in results may be expected.

Reasons for Fluctuations in SLPI Results

1. If we are discussing results obtained within a brief time period (a few days to two-to-three months) changes in one level (for example, Survival and Survival Plus) may simply be related to normal fluctuations in how people perform in general. For example, a person is more or less energetic today than a few days ago, s/he has a mild illness, today is a better day emotionally than four days ago, or s/he did not sleep well the night before her/his most recent interview. Another possible reason for these brief period one level changes is related to a concept of a range for each rating level; that is, a person may be at the border between two rating levels. On her/his best day, therefore, this type of person may sign in the low Intermediate Range and on another day sign in the high Survival Plus Range. We would not expect fluctuations of more than one level for results obtained within a brief time period.

2. If we are discussing results obtained six or more months apart:

    A. Persons at Advanced Plus and Above -

        1) Should almost never show a drop in their SLPI results. The reasons for this are (a) their sign language communication skills are very strong and broad, and (b) they are most likely people who use sign language on a daily basis and who developed sign language communication skills at a very young age.
        2) If a drop does occur it should be no more than one level. Possible reasons are the same as those listed above for "results obtained within a brief time period." Also, see #3 and #4 on the next page.

    B. Persons at the Advanced level may drop one level (that is, to Intermediate Plus) but generally should not drop more than one level-

        1) The reasons for this are their skills are strong and broad and they generally use sign language on a regular basis (especially on the job).
        2) A drop may occur when an Advanced level person does not continue use of sign language on a regular basis and s/he is on the border between the Intermediate Plus and Advanced rating level range. See #1 above and #3 and #4 on the next page.

C.   Persons up through the Intermediate Plus level are more likely than Advanced and above signers to drop one level and may even drop more than one level, because -

1)   Their sign language communication skills are not strong and broad.
2)   People at these skill levels are often in jobs that do not involve extensive daily use of sign language.
3)   The lower a person's skill in this range the more likely a drop in skills may occur over time.
4)   Also, see #3 and #4 below.

NOTE: Intermediate Plus signers should generally not drop below Intermediate.

3.   The interview may influence both results obtained within a brief time period and results obtained over a long time period; that is, it is possible that a previously conducted interview elicited more of an individual's sign language communication skills than the individual's most recent interview. As discussed in SLPI rating materials if raters believe an interview did not provide a candidate with the opportunity to show her/his best sign language communication skills they should recommend the person be given the opportunity to take another interview. Also, and if a candidate believes an interview did not provide her/him with the opportunity to show her/his best sign language communication skills s/he may request another interview with the first interview not being rated.

4.   Consistency across raters (reliability) may also influence both results obtained within a brief time period and results obtained over a long time period. SLPI Coordinators should check ratings by each rater and provide in-service training as appropriate to help ensure consistency of ratings across SLPI Team Members. (See SLPI PAPER #19, *Monitoring the Consistency of Your SLPI Team Members' Ratings*,) As discussed in SLPI rating materials if after follow-up meetings candidates believe their ratings are not accurate they may request re-ratings that will be conducted by other SLPI Team Members; that is, by Team Members not conducting the first ratings. Also, similar to the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), the basis for the SLPI, re-calibration of SLPI Raters via in-service training should be considered every 2-to-3 years. (See SLPI PAPER #5: *SLPI Workshops and Follow-Up Services*.

Conclusion

We trust that the above has provided explanation for why some fluctuations in SLPI results may be expected. Naturally we prefer and expect that most changes will be upward, not downward. Downward fluctuations, however, especially in the lower skills levels, may occur for the reasons discussed above. When we developed our general guidelines both for skill level standards/goals and for the schedule for (re)taking the SLPI we considered these expected and reasonable fluctuations in SLPI results (see SLPI PAPER #17, *Factors Important to Development of Sign Language Program Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents,* and SLPI PAPER #18, *Principles for Development and Refinement of Sign Language Program Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*).

SLPI PAPER #8: MAY ASL TEACHERS SERVE AS SLPI INTERVIEWERS AND RATERS FOR PEOPLE THEY HAVE TAUGHT?

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (9th edition)

SLPI Coordinators, SLPI Team Members, and others have raised the issue of a possible conflict of interest for American Sign Language (ASL) teachers who serve as SLPI Interviewers and Raters. Therefore, we have decided it is time for SLPI PAPER #8 in order to address the question: "May ASL Teachers serve as SLPI Interviewers and Raters for people they have taught?

We assume that this question stems, at least partially, from the concern that:

> If I have taught this person sign language I may not be able to be objective when s/he takes the SLPI. Therefore, this may influence my SLPI interview with this person and regardless of what skills this person demonstrates during his/her SLPI interview I may tend to give a high rating if this person received a high grade in my class and to give a low rating if this person received a low grade in my class.

While we do consider this a legitimate concern to raise we believe ASL teachers may conduct SLPI ratings with persons they are teaching or have taught for the following reasons:

1. There is more than one rater for each SLPI candidate.

2. For most applications of the SLPI candidates may request re-ratings.

3. Sign language teachers are professionals who routinely evaluate the sign language skills of students for whom they serve as teachers.

4. Sign language teachers should be expected to exhibit the same professionalism during SLPI ratings that they exhibit as sign language teachers.

5. Names of raters for SLPI candidates are confidential; that is, raters' names are not shared with persons taking the SLPI.

We understand and appreciate that SLPI Team Members may be uncomfortable conducting SLPI interviews with people they are currently teaching or have recently taught (past 6 to 12 months). This is one reason we recommend that if interviewers are uncomfortable interviewing certain persons, regardless of the reason(s), they should not interview these persons. This same right is given to persons scheduled to take the SLPI; that is, persons taking the SLPI may request another interviewer (though we do not recommend people be allowed to choose their interviewers).

In many applications it may be impossible to setup an SLPI assessment process for which both interviewers and raters do not know persons taking the SLPI. The major reasons for this are that the SLPI process generally involves local interviewers and raters who are skilled in, knowledgeable about, and accepting of the local/program sign language dialect and the fact that the SLPI process works best when SLPI Follow-Up Meetings are conducted in a timely manner by persons who are able to connect SLPI results to local opportunities for sign language communication skills development.

Therefore, although our answer is 'yes' to the question of may ASL teachers serve as SLPI interviewers and raters for people they are teaching or have taught there are exceptions. Therefore, if an SLPI Team Member is uncomfortable interviewing and rating someone s/he should not serve as an interviewer and rater for this person. In order to assure that persons taking the SLPI do have the opportunity to show and be rated on their best sign language communication skills it is important that candidates, interviewers, and raters all are as comfortable as possible within the context of the SLPI process.

SLPI PAPER #9: OPTIONS FOR CONDUCTING AND SHARING SLPI RATINGS

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (13th edition) Introduction

This SLPI PAPER discusses options for conducting SLPI ratings and for sharing SLPI results with persons who take the SLPI. We begin this discussion with an overview of Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI) rating options and we then discuss options for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings. In-depth information (materials and procedures) for these options is provided in three *SLPI Notebook (NB)* Section 3B model documents and in *SLPI NB* Section 9B. These documents are available in the Resources for Evaluators part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI) Rating Options

The L/OPI, the spoken communication skills test from which the SLPI is adapted, allows for rating procedure variations. A frequently used L/OPI rating procedure involves live ratings conducted during and immediately following the interview with the interviewer and an observer making independent ratings and then comparing notes and reaching an official rating consensus. Other L/OPI rating procedures include audio recording of interviews and subsequently conducting independent ratings by one or more raters. In many college-level modern language programs foreign language professors conduct L/OPI interviews and ratings with results used for student placement in classes and for awarding foreign language credit by examination.

L/OPI rating procedures are influenced by the seriousness of the application for which the L/OPI is being used. Two or three raters are used when the application is 'more serious'; for example, when results may influence personnel decisions.

Traditional SLPI Procedure for Conducting and Sharing SLPI Ratings:
SLPI Three Rater Team, In-Depth Written Report, and Optional Follow-Up Meeting

Given that application of the SLPI most often has involved relating SLPI results to sign language communication skill levels expectations for educational faculty/staff and vocational rehabilitation staff, from our first training workshop in 1982 at the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) through 1998 we offered one standard SLPI rating procedure that involved three raters meeting together. For this procedure after independent ratings of each rater have been recorded, assuming raters are in agreement (all within one level of one another), raters follow procedures for preparing an in-depth written report that provides an official rating (requires all raters to agree on a single rating), a description of the candidate's sign language communication skills, and suggestions for improving these skills if appropriate. SLPI Follow-Up Meetings to review SLPI videos, to discuss candidates' sign language communication skills, and to discuss suggestions and opportunities for improving sign language communication skills is optional. This traditional SLPI rating and report writing procedure typically requires three raters approximately two hours to complete. Thus, it is a labor intensive and costly procedure.

Alternative Procedure #1 for Conducting and Sharing SLPI Ratings:
SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure

In 1998, given our 16 years of experience since conducting our first SLPI Training Workshop at the LSD in 1982 and given the improvements we had made in both SLPI training materials and materials used in conducting the SLPI, we were comfortable suggesting another procedure for conducting SLPI ratings and sharing SLPI results with persons taking the SLPI. We refer to this procedure as the SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure.

This procedure places emphasis on SLPI Follow-Up Meetings as the means for sharing SLPI results with no in-depth written SLPI reports. Eliminating in-depth written reports may be an attractive alternative, especially in programs where there are resources for providing follow-up meetings. We believe that follow-up meetings are more personal and more productive for individuals receiving SLPI assessment services than are in-depth SLPI written reports. During follow-up meetings candidates are able to see themselves signing by reviewing their SLPI interview videos with persons knowledgeable about the SLPI who can provide feedback on candidates' sign language communication skill strengths, sign language communication skills suggested for improvement, and opportunities for improving these skills. The individual rater procedure for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings, therefore, re-allocates a portion of the time which was spent by three raters to discuss and write in-depth SLPI results reports to time spent by one SLPI Team member in preparation for and conducting of one-to-one follow-up meetings with SLPI candidates.

In brief, the SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings is as follows:

1.   Interviews are conducted as explained in *SLPI NB* Section 3A with interviews recorded and rated at a later time.

2.   Each candidate's SLPI video is viewed and rated separately by two SLPI raters (one of the raters may be the interviewer) using copies of SLPI Individual Rater Worksheet A and the SLPI Rating Scale, with the steps for each rater being -

        A.   To identify **functional** rating (first 6-to-10 minutes of interview).

        B.   To write possible final ratings based on **functioning**.

        C.   To rewind video and analyze linguistic **form**, providing general descriptors and examples on the SLPI Rating Form for Individual Raters.

        D.   To decide **final rating** after watching entire interview video based on both **function** and **form**.

3.   If the ratings of the two raters:

A.   Agree, the rating procedures is complete, and the SLPI Coordinator -

    1)   Reports the SLPI rating to the individual who took the SLPI and records the rating as official

    2)   Encourages the individual to schedule an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting or states that the candidate should now schedule an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting as the final step in the SLPI Procedure for Conducting and Sharing Results of SLPI Ratings.

B.   Do not agree, SLPI video is given to a third rater -

    1)   If third rater is in agreement with one of the first two raters this rating is the official rating and procedures outlined in "A" immediately above are followed.

    2)   If third rater is not in agreement with one of the first two raters -

        a.   Three raters meet to determine if they can reach agreement on an official rating. If they can the procedures outlined in "A" immediately above are followed and if they cannot candidates is scheduled for another interview.
<div align="center">OR</div>
        b.   Video is sent back to three raters and they independently rate candidate again. If two or three raters are in agreement this rating is the official rating. If there is no agreement across the three raters candidate is scheduled for another interview.
<div align="center">OR</div>
        c.   Candidate is scheduled for another interview.

4.   Generally the SLPI Follow-Up Meeting is part of the normal SLPI procedure the first time a person takes the SLPI with results memorandums given to candidates at follow-up meetings or sent to candidates prior to follow-up meetings. In-depth written reports are not provided. Follow-up meetings are optional for all subsequent SLPIs. (Note: For candidates achieving in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range, SLPI Follow-Up Meetings are always optional.)

<div align="center">Benefits and Potential Drawbacks to SLPI Individual Rater Procedure</div>

In addition to streamlining the rating procedure, reducing scheduling problems for conducting ratings, and reducing the total amount of time required conducting ratings, the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure for Conducting and Sharing Results of SLPI Ratings has additional benefits, including:

1.   Inter-rater reliability (consistency of raters with one another) can be more easily monitored using a system where raters are not together and discussing the rating.

2.   Follow-up meetings are more personal and can be a more positive learning experience for individuals taking the SLPI than are in-depth written reports.

Potential drawbacks to the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure include:

1. Loss of control over SLPI videos and potential breaches to confidentiality.
2. Loss of support for raters in making their final and official rating decisions. Raters must act independently and determine their independent ratings without benefit of discussion with other raters.
3. Loss of the sense of "team".
4. Loss of on going learning from other SLPI Team Members since rater discussion minimized.

Please see SLPI PAPER #19, *Monitoring the Consistency of Your SLPI Team Members' Ratings*, for further discussion of the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure.

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Alternative Procedures #2 and #3 for Conducting and Sharing SLPI Ratings:
SLPI Three and Two Rater Team and Follow-Up Meeting Procedures

</div>

Two additional options for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings combine parts of the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure and SLPI Individual Rater Procedure; that is, these two options consist of Three or Two Member Rater Team meetings to conduct ratings and follow-up meetings which are part of normal SLPI procedures the first time candidates take the SLPI and optional for subsequent times the SLPI is taken. Similar to the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure, results memorandums may be given to candidates at follow-up meetings or sent to candidates prior to follow-up meetings, in-depth written reports are not provided, and for candidates achieving in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range follow-up meetings are always optional.

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Summary Table of Procedures for Conducting and Sharing SLPI Ratings

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A summary of the four procedure options discussed in this paper for conducting and sharing the results of SLPI ratings is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Summary of Procedures for Conducting Sharing SLPI Ratings.

OPTIONS	RATING	SHARING RESULTS		
		Memo	Written Report	SLPI Follow-Up Meeting
Traditional	3 Raters Together	Yes	Yes	Optional
Alternative #1	2 Raters Separately	Yes	No[a]	Yes First Time SLPI Is Taken, Then Optional[b, c]
Alternatives #2 and #3	2 or 3 Raters Together	Yes	No[a]	Yes First Time SLPI Is Taken, Then Optional[b, c]

[a]SLPI Team members conducting follow-up meetings may provide written feedback on suggestions for candidates to improve their sign language skills. A model form for providing this feedback is included in all three Section 3B model documents.
[b]Optional first time for persons achieving SLPI Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range.
[c]May make SLPI Follow-Up Meetings optional for all candidates the first time the SLPI is taken.

For all the SLPI rating procedure options outlined in Table 1 it is essential that all SLPI Team Members have the benefit of periodic in-service training to maintain interviewing and rating skills. These skills include maintaining consistency across SLPI Team Members in interpreting and applying the SLPI Rating Scale. Periodic in-service group training is especially important for the Individual Rater Team Procedure because with this procedure raters do not have the support of continuous, on-going learning from other members of their SLPI Team that occurs during the Three Rater Team Procedure and Two Rater Team Procedures step of "rating team discussion."

Conclusion

We believe the SLPI Individual Rater and Follow-Up Meeting Procedure and the SLPI Three Rater and Two Rater Team and Follow-Up Meeting Procedures for conducting and sharing SLPI ratings provide excellent alternatives to the traditional SLPI Three Rater Team and Written Report Procedure. Feedback from both SLPI Team Members and SLPI candidates support that SLPI Follow-Up Meetings are significantly more beneficial than in-depth written reports for both understanding one's sign language skills and making sign language skill development plans.

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SLPI PAPER #10: SHOULD SLPI RESULTS FROM <u>OTHER</u> PROGRAMS BE ACCEPTED?

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (8th ed.)

Introduction

As use of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) has spread a question whose frequency has increased is, "Should our program accept SLPI results from <u>other</u> programs?"

Options

We have given this significant thought and after several in-depth discussions between us and with a number of SLPI Coordinators we have come to the conclusion that this decision should be an either all or none decision; that is, either SLPI results from <u>all</u> other programs should be accepted or SLPI results from <u>all</u> other programs should not be accepted.

Our Recommendation

We recommend that SLPI results from all other programs be accepted, with official documentation of results for each individual required. Below we provide a rationale for this recommendation. We recognize, however, that a decision to not accept results from other programs must be considered based on local circumstances and needs.

Rationale for Our Recommendation

The primary goal of SLPI use for us is to contribute to improved and effective communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people. We believe this can be accomplished best when respect is shown for our colleagues both locally and nationally.

The SLPI process is based on respect for local, highly skilled sign language communicators; that is, generally it is local people who are trained to conduct SLPI interviews, ratings, and sharing of results and it is local people who implement and monitor use of the SLPI. Given this and given the efforts we have observed by our colleagues across the United States and in Canada to conscientiously implement and monitor their use of the SLPI, we believe all programs using the SLPI are contributing to improved and effective communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people. By accepting SLPI results from <u>other</u> programs we are showing respect for the efforts of our colleagues and we believe, as stated above, that this too will contribute to our goal of improved and effective communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people.

Naturally this leads to the question, "But how can I be sure that ratings across programs are equivalent?" The simple answer is "You cannot be sure". To guarantee equivalent results a nationally based procedure would need to be implemented. We recognize the importance and benefits of nationally based testing systems but we believe implementing SLPI use on a local basis, rather than national basis, has several important benefits. These benefits include (1) involving local/community people in SLPI application; (2) providing local control that allows the SLPI to be implemented and adapted in a manner consistent with local resources and needs; (3) sensitivity and respect for local sign language dialectical variations within the assessment procedure; (4) opportunities for people to review and discuss their assessment results with people knowledgeable about both the SLPI and local options for developing and refining sign language communication skills; (5) opportunities for programs to take into consideration assessment results when planning courses, workshops, and other options to support sign language communication skills development; and (6) providing assessment and follow-up services in a timely and cost effective manner for people taking the SLPI. [For an informative discussion that provides a comparison of nationally based assessment procedures and locally based assessment procedures readers are referred to an article by Julie Moore in the July, 1997, *Journal of Interpreting*, pages 9-22, "Looking at RID and NAD Interpreter Evaluations Through an Intercultural Lens;" this is Reading #19 in *SLPI Notebook (NB)* Section 8. Also, in Section 7 of *SLPI Notebook* materials see SLPI PAPER #12, *Support for Local SLPI Teams and Team Training.*]

<div align="center">

Importance of SLPI Team In-Service Training and
Faculty/Staff Professional Development

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Given the fact that SLPI results from one program may be accepted by other programs we wish to again stress the importance of programs using the SLPI to carefully monitor their use of the SLPI and to provide in-service training for their SLPI Team Members on a regular basis. Training should include workshops and other activities that are designed to help ensure standard SLPI procedures are being followed and to help ensure consistent and appropriate interpretation of the SLPI Rating Scale by SLPI Team Members. (See SLPI PAPER #19, *Monitoring the Consistency of Your SLPI Team Members' Ratings.*) In a training notebook for the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview, the basis for the SLPI, the importance of in-service training is evident from the following statement:

> Extensive standardized training and periodic recalibration have successfully assured the reliability of both interviewers and raters.
> _____. (1982). *Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Assessment.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Also, program guidelines for SLPI use should include a statement that all SLP candidates, including those who have achieved their sign language communication skill level standards/goals, may as part of their professional development plans be requested by their supervisors to take the SLPI. If SLPI candidates achieve below their skill level standards/goals, their professional development plans should include sign language communication skills development activities and for re-taking the SLPI.

Summary

We believe the decision to accept or not accept SLPI results from other programs should be an all or none decision. Further, based on the fact that the primary goal of SLPI use is to contribute to improved and effective communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people, and based on the importance of respect for our colleagues on a local and national basis to the accomplishment of this goal, we recommend that programs accept SLPI results from all other programs with official documentation of results for each individual required. We encourage programs using the SLPI to carefully monitor their use of the SLPI and to provide in-service training for their SLPI Team Members on a regular basis to help ensure standard SLPI procedures are being followed and to help ensure consistent and appropriate interpretation of the SLPI Rating Scale by SLPI Team Members.

In addition we encourage programs to consider sign language communication skills development in professional development planning for SLPI candidates that have and have not achieved their sign language skill level standards/goals.

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SLPI PAPER #11: ADDING SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) TEAM MEMBERS

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (11th edition)

Introduction

What options do we have if we wish to add members to our SLPI Team? This question has been raised by SLPI Coordinators who have wished to add members to their SLPI Teams in order to increase the number of individuals, groups, and programs their SLPI Teams can serve and to replace SLPI Team Members who have left their SLPI Teams. Based on discussions with a number of SLPI Teams the information in this SLPI PAPER is intended to assist local SLPI Coordinators in planning and conducting training for adding SLPI Team Members.

Some Guidelines for Adding SLPI Team Members

1. We recommend that you have a minimum of two years experience with the SLPI prior to considering adding members to your SLPI Team.

2. Potential SLPI Team members may be nominated by an SLPI Team member or by administration.

3. Review and selection of SLPI trainees:

    A. The SLPI Coordinator, with input from SLPI Team members as appropriate, should provide input to administration on potential trainees taking into consideration criteria established by her/his program for SLPI training and team membership.

    B. Based on input from the SLPI Coordinator and availability of potential trainees to participate in SLPI training and to serve as SLPI Team members, administration selects persons to participate in SLPI training.

    C. People selected are invited by administration to participate in training to become an SLPI Team member; invitations include statement that participation in SLPI training is a prerequisite but not a guarantee for becoming an SLPI Team member.

        Note: See Appendix A for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) process for selecting potential FSDB SLPI Team members.

4.   Additional SLPI Team Members may be added via:

    A.   Mentor-Trainee Program - A sample mentor-trainee program is provided in Appendix B of this PAPER.

    B.   Group training planned and conducted by your current SLPI Team Members. This training may be conducted within one week or extend over several weeks in accordance with the resources, preferences, schedules, and other relevant factors for persons conducting and participating in training.

    C.   SLPI Four-Day Training Workshop - If six or more people are to be added to an SLPI Team PROGRAM may wish to contact SLPI Trainers to plan a four-day training workshop. Local SLPI Coordinators are key persons in planning and providing this training and they may work with one or two national trainers to plan and conduct training.

5.   Persons providing SLPI training should:

    A.   Be experienced local SLPI Team Members or national SLPI Trainers.

    B.   Have thorough knowledge of the policies and procedures that guide local SLPI use.

    C.   Have an appreciation and understanding of SLPI training goals.

    D.   Have an understanding of the principles that guide SLPI training and use.

    E.   Have a thorough knowledge of SLPI materials.

<div align="center">Videos for Training Current and Potential SLPI Team Members</div>

In order to ensure videos needed for in-service training for current SLPI Team Members and potential SLPI Team Members are available we recommend that programs using the SLPI request permission to use SLPI videos for training purposes. This form should be sent or given with results to persons taking the SLPI. Sample forms for requesting this permission are included in procedure documents in the Policies, Procedures, and Research part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

<div align="center">More Information</div>

For more in-depth information about SLPI training see F. Caccamise and W. Newell, *Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Training Workshop Goal, Principles, Materials, and Activities/Objectives*; this document is included in the Resources for Evaluators part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

Appendix A

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB)
Process for Selecting and Training Potential FSDB SLPI Team Members

Barbara Curtis and Frank Caccamise
January 2011 (3rd ed.)

Potential new FSDB SLPI Team members may be recommended to the FSDB ASL Program Coordinator by FSDB Administration and FSDB SLPI Team members.

The FSDB ASL Program Coordinator provides administration with her/his input on recommended potential team members. Administration makes selection decisions and extends invitations to people selected to participate in training for becoming FSDB SLPI Team members. In addition to American Sign Language (ASL) skills and knowledge selection decisions take into consideration the wish to have representation across the FSDB community from residential to academic and in the academic program from elementary to high school.

People agreeing to participate in training are trained under the supervision of the FSDB ASL Program Coordinator. Training, which is based on guidelines provided in *SLPI Notebook* Section 7, PAPER #11, Adding SLPI Team Members, includes trainees being paired with experienced FSDB SLPI Team members for observations of interviews and ratings.

Appendix B

Sample Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI)
Mentor-Trainee Program

I.   Factors to Consider in Selecting SLPI Trainees

   A.   Potential trainees should have achieved the approved PROGRAM criteria for
        SLPI Team training (SLPI rating, RID Certification, ASLTA Certification, etc.).

   B.   Ability to function in a professional manner as an SLPI Team Member including
        maintenance of strict confidentiality relative to SLPI results.

   C.   Supportive of program policy and procedures that guide SLPI use.

   D.   Commitment to concept of SLPI Team Members as a "Team".

II.   Selection Procedures for SLPI Interviewer-Rater Trainees

   A.   In consultation with other SLPI Team Members SLPI Coordinator(s) make
        recommendations to appropriate PROGRAM administrators for SLPI trainees.

        Note: Since trainees are potential SLPI Team Members consensus among current
        SLPI Team Members is an important consideration in recommending and selecting
        persons to be trainees.

   B.   SLPI Coordinator(s) and administrators discuss recommendations and make decisions
        relative to persons to be invited to be SLPI Team trainees.

   C.   SLPI Coordinator(s) and appropriate administrators invite persons identified to
        become SLPI trainees.

III.   Mentors: Each trainee is assigned an SLPI Team member as a mentor by the SLPI
        Coordinator(s).

IV.   Sharing Training Materials

   A.   At their first meetings mentors provide trainees with a copy of the *SLPI Notebook
        (NB)* and an overview of the information in this notebook.

   B.   Throughout their training trainees are provided additional training materials, and
        review and discussion of training materials, by their mentors as may be appropriate.

V.   Mentor-Trainee Information Meeting Goals

    A.   To discuss general information about the SLPI and policies and procedures for SLPI use with program and non-program faculty/staff/employees.

    B.   To discuss interview structure, techniques, and strategies using two or more SLPI interviews as examples.

    C.   To discuss SLPI Rating Scale using a selection of SLPI interviews at each SLPI rating level.

    D.   To discuss principles and procedures for conducting SLPI Follow-Up Meetings.

Note: Considering local SLPI use PROGRAMS should add to and modify these goals as appropriate.

VI.   Training for Rating Skills

    A.   Trainees read PROGRAM *SLPI NB* Section 3B (S3B) and S9B.

    B.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss S3B.

    C.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss previously rated SLPI interviews.

    D.   Trainees attend SLPI rating meetings in which their mentors are raters.

    E.   Trainees fill out rater forms but these are not part of the official rating procedures and are not shared with SLPI Rating Team during rater meeting.
Note: Trainees do <u>not</u> participate in rater meeting discussions.

    F.   Following rating meetings trainees share their rating forms with their mentors and trainees and mentors discuss rating meeting experiences.

    G.   Mentors monitor progress of trainees toward making accurate, independent ratings and providing appropriate general functional descriptors and examples for each form category on SLPI Rater Worksheet. PROGRAM *SLPI NB* S4A, S4B, S5, and S6 are used as may be appropriate to help with this process.

    H.   If an SLPI Rater Discussion Worksheet is used mentors work with trainees in developing skills in completing this worksheet.

VII.   Training for Interviewing Skills

    A.   Trainees read PROGRAM *SLPI NB* S3A and S9B scheduling and interviewing information.

    B.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss S3A and S9B scheduling and interviewing information.

    C.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss previous SLPI interviews.

    D.   Trainees interview two to three volunteer candidates (should include minimum of one candidate Intermediate or below and one candidate above Intermediate).

    E.   Mentors and trainees review and discuss volunteer interviews conducted by trainees.

VIII. Training for Conducting SLPI Follow-Up Meetings

A.   Trainees read PROGRAM *SLPI NB* S3B SLPI Follow-Up Meeting information and related information in S9B.

B.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss S3B and S9B SLPI Follow-Up Meeting information and follow-up meetings conducted by mentors.

C.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss previous SLPI interviews.

D.   With permission of candidates, trainees observe two or three follow-up meetings conducted by their mentors (may be done live or recorded).

E.   Mentors and trainees review and discuss follow-up meetings conducted by mentors.

F.   With permission of candidates, trainees conduct two or three follow-up meetings that are observed by their mentors and/or recorded.

G.   Trainees and mentors review and discuss follow-up meetings conducted by trainees.

Note: All SLPI Team Members are not required to conduct SLPI Follow-Up Meetings but knowledge about follow-up meetings is important for all SLPI Team Members.

IX.   Selecting SLPI Team Members

A.   As appropriate mentors provide trainees and SLPI Coordinator(s) with feedback on the progress of trainees.

B.   Following completion of specified training activities mentors meet with the SLPI Coordinator(s) and discuss recommendations for trainees relative to membership on the PROGRAM SLPI Team.

C.   Recommendation for each trainee may be one or more of following:

1.   Become an SLPI Team member as an interviewer, rater, or both.
2.   As an SLPI Team member conduct SLPI Follow-Up Meetings; generally a team member must also be a rater to conduct follow-up meetings.
3.   Participate in additional training for interviewing, rating, or conducting follow-up meetings.
4.   Not recommended for SLPI Team

D.   SLPI Coordinator(s) and mentors meet with trainees to inform trainees of decision and discuss as appropriate; decisions may also be shared in writing with trainees and appropriate administrators.

SLPI PAPER #12: SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SLPI TEAMS AND SLPI TEAM TRAINING

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (12th edition)

Note: In this PAPER we support the benefits of local SLPI Teams and local SLPI training. However there has been a recent increase in requests for SLPI services to be provided on a non-local basis. Given what we have learned to date about SLPI use and considering developments in technology we are now more open to options for providing SLPI services on a non-local basis. For information about SLPI non-local remote services interested readers are referred to the North Carolina ASL Teachers Association (www.ncaslta.org).

Introduction

Over the years we have received numerous requests from individuals for Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Training. In response we have explained that our workshops are conducted on a local basis, not at a national or central training facility, and that participants generally are 8-to10 highly skilled local signers. Several individuals have then asked if they may join a workshop being conducted in another state. Unfortunately, given our experiences this is not an alternative that we believe is appropriate and we have referred persons making such requests to programs that do provide training for conducting sign language assessments at central locations.

Expanding upon SLPI PAPER #3, *What Does the SLPI Assess?*, the purpose of this SLPI PAPER is to discuss why we support local people providing sign language communication skills assessment and, consistent with this, why we support and conduct our training for SLPI Teams on a local basis. In providing this information we wish to stress that there are good reasons for conducting training and for conducting assessments on a national or centralized basis as well, and depending on many factors, including goals, training and conducting of assessments on a national or centralized basis may be appropriate.

Support for Local SLPI Team Members and SLPI Training

Our primary goal for SLPI use is to support effective sign language communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people by providing information on how well people are able to use sign language for their communication needs and by supporting people in development of their sign language communication skills. We believe that these goals can be best accomplished via integrated sign language communication skills assessment and development programs that are implemented and conducted on a local basis. Reasons we support locally trained SLPI Teams providing sign language assessment services include the following:

1. Allows skills assessment-development programs to be implemented and adapted in a manner that is consistent with and sensitive to local resources and needs.
2. Allows assessment and follow-up services to occur in a timely and cost effective manner.
3. Allows sensitivity and respect for local sign language dialectical variations. This is especially important for languages such as American Sign Language (ASL) that have developed and are used in bilingual communities. As stressed by Haugen (1977, pages 91 and 98), "The concept of 'norm' in reference to language is highly ambiguous and slippery .... we have to recognize that the communicative norm which grows up in bilingual communities is more elastic and less predictable than that of a monolingual community."

This supports the training of highly skilled **local** ASL signers to conduct SLPI services (interviews, ratings, and follow-up meetings) in order to help ensure the assessment procedures is respectful of and sensitive to the local communicative norm for ASL communicators.

4.   Allows opportunities for people to review and discuss their assessment results with people knowledgeable about both the assessment tool and local options for developing and refining sign language communication skills. A follow-up meeting to review and discuss assessment results and suggestions for improving skills if appropriate is a critical part of an integrated sign language skills assessment-development program.

5.   Allows programs to take into consideration assessment results when planning courses, workshops, and other options to support sign language communication skills development, thus allowing for assessment and opportunities for skills development to be closely linked.

6.   Reliable use of the SLPI Rating Scale requires that raters have shared perspectives on applying SLPI ratings to sign language communication and given what is discussed in #3 above that raters have shared perspectives on interpreting SLPI ratings as they apply to local sign language communication. We believe this can be best accomplished by training local SLPI Team Members together. Further, since the SLPI is a criterion based assessment with the anchor or highest criterion point of the SLPI Rating Scale being highly skilled native/native-like signers it is important that this training involve rating of local signers, including highly skilled local native/native-like signers.

Independence of First SLPI Ratings, Monitoring SLPI Team Members' Ratings, and Confidentiality

The independence of each rater's first rating is critical to helping ensure fairness of the rating procedures. Although important for all assessment tools this is especially important for our recommended use of the SLPI since it involves local raters who often know persons who take the SLPI. In addition, consistent with SLPI PAPER #19, *Monitoring the Consistency of Your SLPI Team Members' Ratings* we wish to stress the importance of monitoring SLPI Team Members' ratings in order to help ensure SLPI Team Members are consistently and appropriately interpreting SLPI Rating Scale ratings as they apply to local sign language communication. And again, although important to all assessment tools, use of local interviewers and raters means that special effort must be made to help ensure confidentiality of SLPI results. As stressed in SLPI Training Workshops and SLPI training materials, SLPI Team Members are critical to helping ensure confidentiality of SLPI results and documents guiding SLPI use should specify who receives copies of SLPI results. Sharing of results with any other persons or groups not specified in program documents should require release of information forms being signed by persons taking the SLPI.

Conclusion

Our primary goal for SLPI use is to support effective sign language communication among Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Hearing people. In this SLPI PAPER we have shared reasons why we believe local SLPI training and implementation supports this goal. In addition, we have stressed the importance of independent SLPI ratings, the importance of monitoring SLPI Team Members' ratings, and the importance of confidentiality to helping ensure the fairness of locally controlled sign language communication skills assessment procedures. As stated earlier, we recognize that there are good reasons for training and conducting assessments on a national or centralized basis as well and we support all efforts that contribute to the effectiveness of sign language communication.

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

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
SLPI Co-Developers/Consultants
September 2011 (9th edition)

> 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.
>
> > 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 to ten?

The reason for a minimum number of six 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 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 interviews, ratings, and 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 six to ten workshop participants.

As discussed in SLPI PAPER #11 in this document, *Adding SLPI Team Members*, PROGRAMS may wish to add members to their SLPI Teams in order (a) to increase the number of individuals/ programs SLPI Teams can serve and to replace SLPI Team Members who have left SLPI Teams. 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 six to ten 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.

**SLPI PAPER #14: SIGN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS AND
ASL ASSESSMENT OPTIONS**

Dr. Frank Caccamise
SLPI Co-Developer/Consultant
April 2012 (16th edition)

Introduction

Having received several inquiries for information about sign language assessments for younger
students, as well as inquiries about ASL assessment instruments in addition to the SLPI
developed by Bill Newell and myself, I decided to write this SLPI PAPER.

This SLPI PAPER includes the following with some minor edits: (1) an inquiry from Sarah
MacDonald, a California State University Northridge (CSUN) National Center on Deafness
Graduate Assistant, for information about assessing students' sign language skills; (2) a request I
sent to SLPI Coordinators to assist in providing information in response to Sarah's request; and
(3) a summary of what I learned from the responses provided. Following this is my response to a
request from Stacey Suprenant, Maine School for the Deaf, which includes information about
ASL assessment instruments in addition to the SLPI. This if followed by information about a
general sign language assessment website, a brief discussion of a planned study by a Lamar
University graduate student to develop an ASL assessment for students that could be
administered by teachers in their classrooms, discussion of efforts to adapt the SLPI for use with
Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) elementary school students, a visual
communication and sign language assessment tool study for deaf and hard-of-hearing children
birth to 5 years of age, and information about the Communication Sign Language Assessment
(CSLA), a classroom assessment tool for use with instructors.

If you have suggestions for additions, updates or corrections for what is shared in this paper
please contact me (frank8144@gmail.com) or consider posting your suggestions in the Forum
part of http://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

Assessing Students' Sign Language Skills

E-Mail Request from Sarah MacDonald
Subject: ASL Assessments
Date: Thurs., 23 Mar 2000
From: Sarah MacDonald <sarah.macdonald@csun.edu>
To: FCCNCR@ritvax.isc.rit.edu
cc: Catherine McLeod <catherine.mcleod@csun.edu>

Hello,

My name is Sarah MacDonald and I work at California State University Northridge with the
National Center on Deafness. I am currently working on a project called "MENUS", Meeting the
Educational Needs of Underserved Students.

Project MENUS serves as a national model to develop and distribute in-service training activities
and products. The primary goal is to increase knowledge of personal working in schools, state

departments of education and support agencies with an emphasis on those responsible for implementing, overseeing and consulting on services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing from infancy through age 21. Activities will be customized to meet the needs of individual districts or campuses. Administrators can select training topics most pertinent to their setting from a "menu" of options, which allows flexibility to tailor in-service instruction to their specific issues. This is a three-year federal grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education that commenced on October 1, 1999.

I am currently looking for information related to the assessment of student sign skills. I would appreciate any help you can offer in this area to assist us in this project.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Sarah MacDonald
Graduate Assistant
MENUS - Meeting Educational Needs of Underserved Students
National Center On Deafness California
State University Northridge (818) 677-
2099 v/tty, (818) 677-7192 fax

My E-Mail Request to SLPI Coordinators

March 25, 2000

Good Evening to All,

I am forwarding a request from Sarah MacDonald at CSUN. She is interested in receiving information "related to the assessment of students' sign language skills".

If you have information you wish to share with Sarah I would appreciate if you would respond to her. If you respond I encourage you to include the age of the students for whom the assessment has been used and may be appropriate. Naturally I am interested in any use of the SLPI and adaptations of the SLPI and other interviewing techniques that you may have used as well as other approaches for assessing students' sign language skills. If you have been creative (developed your own techniques) please consider sharing this information.

IF YOU WISH COPIES OF RESPONSES PLEASE REPLY TO ALL RECEIVING THIS EMAIL ASAP. I will be responding to Sarah but will wait until this coming Thursday, March 30, before responding to give anyone who does not wish to be copied to share this with us.

Thank you for considering Sarah's and my requests.

Regards,
Frank

My Response to Sarah

March 30, 2000

Hi Sarah,

A number of SLPI Coordinators' responses have included the names Sam Supalla, Jenny Singleton, and Tina Wix, and therefore it seems that these three colleagues are among the best people to contact for information about assessing students' sign language skills.

In 1999 an excellent article by Susan J. Maller, Jenny L. Singleton, Samuel J. Supalla, and Tina Wix was published in the *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education (4*, 4, 249-269*),* "The Development and Psychometric Properties of the American Sign Language Proficiency Assessment (ASL-PA)". This article includes excellent reviews of the sign language assessment literature and the ASL acquisition by children literature. Also, this publication includes a discussion of three language solicitation procedures for use with young students:
(1) an interview with an adult signer, (2) peer interaction, and (3) story retelling. The authors' section of this publication states that correspondence should be directed to Samuel Supalla, Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation, College of Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721 (e-mail: ssupalla@u.arizona.edu).

Another excellent article authored by Brenda Schick was published in *JDSE* (1997, *2*, 4, 234-251), "The effects of discourse genre on English language complexity in school-age deaf students". In the discussion section of this publication Brenda states: "The results show that language produced by deaf students using the LPI interview technique is generally more complex than that produced during a more informal spontaneous interview or elicited using a complex picture story" (page 246).

I am not familiar with the work of Gene Mirus at the University of Texas (mirus@mail.utexas.edu), and I would be interested in learning about his work.

Brenda Aron, who also was listed as a contact, now lives in Washington State. If you do not have an address for her you should be able to contact her through her husband, Len, who works at the Washington School for the Deaf.

At NTID we use a Language/Communication Questionnaire (L/CBQ) and an adaptation of the SLPI, called the Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI), to assess the sign language communication of our students (see Appendixes A and B). Although these were developed for use with college age students they may also be used with high school age students and possibly further adapting could be done (such as the use of pictures and objects) to make use of interview techniques appropriate for use with younger children. As stated above Maller et al. discuss three language solicitation procedures for use with young students including an interview technique.

Other SLPI Coordinators who were kind enough to respond that you may wish to contact include:

1. Gayle DeVille (Gdeville@ksd.k12.ky.us.), Kentucky School for the Deaf, stated they have developed a set of suggested questions to use in sign language interview assessments conducted with students.
2. Mickey Jones, Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD) (dhsvrcv@dhs.state.il.us) – 'At ISD we have used the SLPI 3 or 4 times with students 7-to-12 years of age. We videotaped the interviews and transcribed them as English glosses. We think it worked well but it is not standardized or simple. It took a great deal of time but it was a good functional analysis that gave us good information."
3. Jean Parmir, Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD) (parmir@osd.ode.state.oh.us) – "We do assessments of students through our Mutlifactored Evaluation Center. Part of this is an ASL interview with a deaf interviewer…. I watch the interview, take notes, use a form I developed that lists ASL features, and write a report that is descriptive (does not include a specified level of Competency/rating). I am anxiously awaiting a format developed specifically for deaf children."
4. Anne Potter, Vermont School for the Deaf (anne@austine.pvt.k12.vt.us) – "I have my own assessment from GBSD and NCSD..."
5. Bonnie-Lyn Barker, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) (barkerbl@sprint.ca) - "We use the SLPI to assess students who come through the center. I am not sure that many modifications, if any, have been made. I suspect only junior high school and older have been assessed..."

Finally, if you have not already done so, I recommend that you contact:

1. Boystown Institute in Omaha, Nebraska - Boystown has a long history of conducting language assessments with children who are deaf, including assessment of sign language skills. Two excellent people to contact at Boystown Institute are:

    A. For information about language assessments, including sign language - Mary Pat Moeller, Director, Center for Childhood Deafness, Language, and Learning, Boys Town National Research Hospital, 555 North 30th Street, Omaha, NB 68131, 402-0498-6521 (V/TTY), 402-498-6755 (Fax), moeller@boystown.org
    B. For information about interpreting skills assessment - Kevin T. Williams, M.S., C.I./C.T., Sign Communication and Curriculum Specialist, Director, EIPA Diagnostic Center, Boys Town National Research Hospital, 555 North 30th Street, Omaha, NB 68131, 402-498-6765 (V/TTY), 402-498-6527 (Fax), williamk@boystown.org (Note: Kevin is now employed in the NTID ASL/Interpreter Education Department.)

2. Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Network and Clearinghouse, KDES PAS-6, Gallaudet University, Kendall Green, 800 Florida Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002-3695, 1-202-651-5340 (V/TTY) (e-mail: Ella.Gilbert@gallaudet.edu; web page: www.gallaudet.~pcnmp.edu).

In conclusion, assessing students' sign language communication skills, especially younger students, requires some flexibility and willingness to experiment. Contacting the people listed above may provide you with additional information that may be helpful to you.

If any other information crosses my desk, or computer, on this topic, I will forward it to you.

Frank Caccamise, Senior Researcher
NTID/RIT

ASL Assessment Instruments

To: Stacey Suprenant
From: Dr. Frank Caccamise
Subject: AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) ASSESSMENT OPTIONS
Date: 10/23/00

It is nice to learn that you are enjoying your life and new home in snowy Maine.

Busy day but to get you started you may click on the SLPI web site in my signature file below. As per your request, ASL assessment options, in addition to the SLPI, include the following:

1.   As you know, Gallaudet has an SCPI. As you are aware, there are some differences between the Gallaudet SCPI and our SLPI. Training at Gallaudet is provided for their SCPI. Dr. Mike Kemp, Chair, Gallaudet Dept. of ASL, Linguistics, and Interpretation, can provide you with information about the Gallaudet SCPI I believe. I think you may also contact the Dept. of Sign Communication, 202-651-5200 (V/TTY). I am not sure about this since Gallaudet, like NTID, likes to change organizational structure periodically.
     Note: In May 2006 the Gallaudet University Center for ASL Literacy announced the introduction of the GU-ASLPI - See SLPI PAPER #4, *SLPI-SCPI-SLPI History*.

2.   Also, Mel Carter has developed the ASLPI (ASL Proficiency Interview). I believe he may be contacted at The ASLPI Center, 3066 Geronimo Avenue, Simi Valley, CA 93036.
     In addition, information about the ASLPI and its' use at California State University Northridge is available at the following website: www.csun.edu/~speddhh/aslpi.htm.

3.   Texas also has their version of an interview technique. Contact Ric Battaile, 512-469-3000, or the TX State Board for Educator Certification, 512-469-3000.

Via US Postal mail I will be sending you an SLPI Training Workshop Planning paper and names and addressees for selected SLPI Coordinators trained by us.

Again, glad you are enjoying your new home in Maine.

Regards,
Frank

General Sign Language Assessment Web Site

The following website that was setup and is maintained by Tobias Haug provides an overview on sign language assessment instruments that have been developed for different national sign languages: http://www.signlang-assessment.info/eng/eng.html.

ASL Test for Students in Development – 2002

In *NADmag*, 2002, *2* (4), an article entitled the *2002 Stokoe Scholarship Award Winners*, includes a report on a project to be conducted by Adonia K. Smith, a doctoral candidate in Deaf Education and Deaf Studies, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX. This article states that Adonia's project, which is entitled Project-PAH! A Teacher-Friendly ASL Test: Construction, Validity, Reliability and Usability of the Test of American Sign Language (ASL) Abilities", will develop an American Sign Language (ASL) test that teachers can administer easily to their deaf students in the classroom and that results will be disseminated through DVD technologies.

March 2011 Note to Readers: Any updating of the above would be appreciated.

An ASL Assessment Tool for Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) Students

Under the leadership of Tracie Snow, FSDB Curriculum and Staff Development Director, and Barbara Curtis, FSDB American Sign Language (ASL) Program Coordinator, and in consultation with me, during AY09-10 FSDB kindergarten (K) through 3rd grade students' ASL skills were evaluated using an assessment process adapted from the SLPI. Based on what we learned from AY09-10 FSDB student ASL assessments during AY10-11 assessment materials and procedures were updated and administered to K through 3rd grade students. A major goal of this updating was to provide more consistency in this assessment process with a focus on how results are recorded and reported. Based on AY10-11 results additional refinements were made to assessment materials and procedures to be used with AY11-12 FSDB K through 5th grade students (see Appendix C of this paper). It is hoped that AY11-12 results will allow us to provide FSDB teachers with recommendations that will help them to plan activities to support further development of their students' ASL skills. In addition plans are to monitor assessment results to better understand ASL skills that may be expected of FSDB students at each grade (and age) level. (Note: Several FSDB staff members have contributed significantly to this project and their names of some these staff are included on the project documents that are included in Appendix C. Among these the contributions of Katie Bechtold, FSDB Staff Interpreter and Assistant ASL Program Coordinator, have been especially significant.

Assessment Tool Study for Birth to 5 Years of Age

In April 2012 Barbara Curtis, FSDB, shared with me an announcement from Gallaudet University for a study to develop a visual communication and sign language assessment tool for deaf and hard-of-hearing children from birth to 5 years of age. The Research Team for this study includes Dr. Laurene Simms and Dr. Diane Clark, Gallaudet University, and Dr. Sharon Baker, University of Tulsa. The contact email address for this study is mailto:v12@gallaudet.edu.

Communication Sign Language Assessment (CSLA)

The primary goal of the CSLA, a classroom observational assessment tool, is to assess instructors' classroom sign language communication skills and to use this information to assist instructors with their sign language communication skills development. For information about this assessment tool see Caccamise, Reeves, Poor, and Carr (2003), reading #16 in *SLPI Notebook* Section 8, *Selected Readings for the SLPI*. Additional information about the CSLA, including CSLA materials and procedures, is provided in the "NTID: OCAS" part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

Conclusion

Assessing students' sign language communication skills, especially younger students, requires: (1) flexibility, (2) a willingness to learn from your colleagues, (3) a willingness to experiment and be creative, and (4) most importantly a willingness to modify what we do in order to provide students (and others) with the fairest and most accurate assessment procedures possible given our current knowledge.

Which sign language assessment instrument is the "best"? The answer to this question is the same as it should be to all such questions. There is no one best test! SLPI PAPER #17 *Factors Important to Development of Sign Language Communication Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*, discusses factors to consider for policies and procedures that guide use of the SLPI. These same factors apply to application of all sign language assessment instruments. The best assessment instrument is one that fits the needs of the people for whom you are providing sign language assessment and skills development services. All assessment instruments should be applied in a manner that is fair and ethical for all people who are impacted upon by the application of each assessment instrument.

I hope the information provided in this paper will be helpful to you and I encourage you to contact other people and groups listed in this paper for additional information about assessing sign language skills. Also, I would appreciate if you would share with me any information that may add to and improve what is shared in this paper.

Appendix A
Language/Communication Background Questionnaire (L/CBQ)[a]
January 2010

Please complete this questionnaire online at **www.rit.edu/ntid/lcbq**. *Your responses are needed to plan access services and housing assignments. If you are unable to complete this questionnaire online, complete this paper copy and return it in the envelope provided within ten (10) days. Thank you.*

or (for on-line version)
Your responses to this questionnaire are needed to plan access services and housing assignments. Please complete this questionnaire within ten (10) days. Thank you.

INSERT LABEL WITH STUDENT'S LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, & RIT UNIVERSITY ID.

Type or Print your Email Address:

1. How do you express yourself to others most of the time:

a. To deaf and hard-of-hearing people? Select one.
- Sign Language Alone
- Speech Alone
- Speech and Sign Together (Simultaneous Communication)
- Writing/Text

b. To hearing people? Select one.
- Sign Language Alone
- Speech Alone
- Speech and Sign Together ((Simultaneous Communication)
- Writing/Text

c. To immediate family members? Select one.
- Sign Language Alone
- Speech Alone
- Speech and Sign Together (Simultaneous Communication)
- Writing/Text

2. How do you best receive information from others? Select one.
- Sign Language Alone
- Speech Alone
- Speech and Sign Together (Simultaneous Communication)
- Writing/Text

3. How well do you think most hearing people understand your speech? Select one.
They understand:
- Everything I say
- Almost everything
- About half
- Only a few words
- Nothing

4. How well do you understand speech when you both speechread and/or use your hearing? Select one.
I understand:
- Everything people say
- Almost everything
- About half
- Only a few words
- Nothing

5. How well do you understand people when they use simultaneous communication (sign and speech together)? Select one.
I understand:
- Everything people say
- Almost everything
- About half
- Only a few words
- Nothing

[a]The L/CBQ was adapted from the Language Background Questionnaire (Hatfield, Caccamise, and Siple, 1978) and the Communication Background Questionnaire by F. Caccamise and J. Wallber, Jan. 1996. Revisions since this original L/CBQ have been made by F. Caccamise, J. Wallber, and E. Rosenfield, Jan. 2000, F. Caccamise, Feb. 2002, F. Caccamise and J. Wallber. Feb. 2003, July 2003, and July 2004, F. Caccamise, L. Bryant, S. Nelson, L. Scott, and A. Smith, March 2007, F. Caccamise, L. Bryant, S. Nelson, and L. Scott, May 2008 and January 2009, and F. Caccamise, L. Bryant, S. Nelson, L. Scott, and J. MacLeod, January 2010. In addition, up until 2010, James Wilson provided invaluable support for how to best format the L/CBQ, and how to best code L/CBQ student responses, as well as providing suggestions for the wording of L/CBQ items.

6. **Please rate your sign language skills. Select one.**

    Excellent

    Good

    Fair

    Basic

    I don't know sign language

7. **How old were you when you learned sign language? Select one.**

    Since birth

    _____ years old

    Unknown

    I don't know sign language

8. **Do you use a hearing aid? Select one.**

    All of the time Most
    of the time About half
    of the time Not often

    No

9. **Have you ever had cochlear implant surgery? Select one.**

    No

    Yes, at what age: _____

10. **Do you currently use a cochlear implant? Select one.**

    No

    Yes

11. **Do you use an FM system in classroom situations? Select one.**

    Never

    Sometimes

    Always/Most of the Time

12. **What kind of communication access services were provided to you in your last school? Select all that apply.**

    Sign Language Interpreting

    Real Time Captioning (CART or C-Print)

    FM System

    Notetaking

    Other: _____

13. **Do you benefit from sign language interpreting in any of the following situations? Select all that apply.**

    In classroom situations

    In small group meetings

    In one-on-one meetings

    I do not benefit from interpreting

14. **Do you have communication access needs related to your vision (for example, close vision or tactile interpreting and large print)?**

15. **Please provide any additional comments you wish that may help us determine your communication needs and be better prepared for your arrival on campus.**

LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE (L/CBQ) CODING SHEET

Frank Caccamise, Linda Bryant, Steve Nelson, Larry Scott, & James Wilson

January 2010

First five fields/cells/columns in database should be: Last Name, First Name, Email Address, Program Code, and University ID.

Note: For L/CBQ items that students do not provide responses, record as 99 in the database.

Coding for Language/Communication Background Questionnaire (L/CBQ)			
Item	**Heading on Data Sheet**	**Possible Responses**	**Coding for Responses**
# Descriptor			
1a. How do you express yourself most of the time to deaf and hard-of-hearing people?	QSTO1A	Sign Language Alone Speech Alone Speech and Sign together (Simultaneous Communication) Writing/Text If more than one checked	1 2 3 4 5
1b. How do you express yourself most of the time to hearing people?	QSTO1B	Same as #1a	Same as #1a
1c. How do you express yourself most of the time to immediate family members?	QSTO1C	Same as #1a	Same as #1a
2. How do you best receive information from others?	QSTO2	Same as #1a	Same as #1a
3. How well do you think most hearing people understand your speech?	QST03	Everything Almost everything About half Only a few Nothing	5 4 3 2 1
4. How well do you understand speech when you both speechread and/or use your hearing?	QSTO4	same as #3	same as #3
5. How well do you understand a person when they use simultaneous communication (sign and speech together)?	QSTO5	same as #3	same as #3
6. Please rate your sign language skills.	QST06	Excellent Good Fair Basic I don't know sign language	5 4 3 2 1

Coding for Language/Communication Background Questionnaire (L/CBQ)				
Item		**Heading on Data Sheet**	**Possible Responses**	**Coding for Responses**
#	**Descriptor**			
7.	age began to learn sign language	QSTO7	since birth less than 1 yr or 1 yr 2-98 if between years unknown I don't know sign language	0 1 2-98 next yr's code 77 88
8.	hearing aid	QSTO8	All of the time Most of the time About half the time Not often No	1 5 4 3 2
9	Cochlear implant surgery	QSTO9 QST09Age	No Yes Age of CI Surgery	2 1 Age (99 if No Response)
10	use cochlear implant currently	QST10	No Yes	2 1
11	Use an FM System in Classrooms	QST 11	Always Never Sometimes	1 2 3
12	communication access services in last school	QST12	A. sign language interpreting B. real time captioning C. FM system D. Notetaking E. other	For A, B, C, & D code as 1 if checked & code as 2 if not checked; For E insert text or code as1 if checked with no text inserted and code as 2 if not checked
13	benefit from sign language interpreting	QST13	A. in classroom B. in small group meetings C. in one-to-one meetings D. do not benefit	For all code as 1 if checked, 2 if not checked
14	communication access needs related to vision	QST14	if responds if no response	Text 99
15	additional comments for communication needs	QST15	if responds if no response	Text 99

Appendix B

Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI) Materials and
Procedures with NTID Students

Frank Caccamise, Geoff Poor, and Barbara Ray Holcomb[a, b]
National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) Rochester
Institute of Technology (RIT)
Rochester, NY 14623-0887
September 2011 (4th ed.)

Instructions for SIPI Interviewers

1.   When student arrives for an SIPI greet the student using ASL and give the student a copy
of SIPI Information for Students (Attachment 1).

2.   Begin and continue the interview with ASL until sufficient information about the student's
ASL skills has been obtained.

3.   If the student is unable to understand questions signed in ASL use the following strategies
as appropriate:

A.   Restate question "verbatim" in ASL

B.   Rephrase in ASL

C.   Fingerspell

D.   Go back to a topic/question you know student can understand.

E.   Add lip movement for speech

F.   Add voice for speech

Note: Be sure to allow students sufficient time to think and initiate a response before using
above strategies.

_____

4. Begin with general questions about the student's background; for example, where the student is from, where s/he went to school, if s/he has deaf parents and/or deaf brothers and sisters, and/or the student's preferred means for communicating.

5. Discuss other topics based on the responses/interest of the student; for example, hobbies, subjects studied in high school, major at NTID, experiences with interpreters, and Summer Vestibule Program and/or other experiences at NTID/RIT.

Note: A sample of appropriate questions for inclusion in an SIPI is provided in Attachment 2.

6. When you are comfortable assign the student an SIPI rating (see Attachment 3 for the SIPI Rating Scale) and discuss student's interest in taking Sign Language Program (SLP) courses including all potentially appropriate SLP courses to be offered during the upcoming quarter. Record SIPI rating, recommended courses, and other appropriate information on the SVP Students' SIPI Results and Recommendations Form (Attachment 4).

7. Try to maintain comfort throughout SIPI by:

   A. Using pleasant facial expression/body language.

   B. Maintaining a pleasant, comfortable room set-up (eliminate "noise," including extraneous auditory noise, glare, light source behind you, and clutter in room).

   C. Not "dragging out" interviews; try to keep interviews to a maximum of 15-to-20 minutes with interviews of 5-to-10 minutes for students having minimal sign language skills.

8. End interview session with one or two questions the student can easily answer and thank the student for coming to the interview.

Attachment 1

SIGN INSTRUCTION PLACEMENT INTERVIEW (SIPI) INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

1. We will have a conversation. I will ask you questions and you should ask me questions.

2. We want to get the best sample of your sign language skills. Generally I will use only sign language when I ask you questions. This is to help us know how well you understand sign language alone when there is no speech. However, sometimes I may use signing with lip movement or signing with voice.

3. We want you to demonstrate your best sign language communication skills.

4. Our conversation will help us identify the best sign language courses for you.

5. Please answer my questions as completely as possible.

Attachment 2

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR SIGN INSTRUCTION PLACEMENT INTERVIEWS

YES/NO QUESTIONS

Examples: Are you enjoying SVP?
            Do you have any deaf brothers and sisters?
            Have you selected a major?
            Did you attend a residential school?
            Did you have interpreters in your classes?

CHOICE QUESTIONS

Examples: Are your parents deaf or hearing?
            Did you attend a residential school or a public school?

POLITE REQUESTS/DESCRIPTIONS

Examples: Please tell me about the high school you attended.
            Please tell me how you prefer to communicate with deaf/hearing friends.

INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Examples: Who is your career counselor?
            When did you become deaf?
            Where did you go to high school?
            What is your major?

REPHRASABLE QUESTIONS

Example: Can you describe your favorite subject in high school and why you liked it so much?
Rephrased: What was your favorite subject in high school (and why)?

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

Examples: If you could live anywhere in the United States where would you live and why?
            If you could change anything about SVP what would you change?

DESCRIPTIVE PRELUDES

Example: Choosing a college to attend is very difficult sometimes. Some people believe deaf
            students should attend Gallaudet or NTID while other people believe local colleges are
            better. Please tell me what things you considered when choosing to come to NTID.

SUPPORTED OPINION QUESTIONS

Examples: Why did you decide to attend NTID?
            Why do you want to major in accounting?

Attachment 3

Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI) Rating Scale

Table1. The Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI) Five Point Rating Scale for Assisting NTID Students' Selection of Sign Language Education Program Courses.[a]

Ratings	Descriptors - Appropriate Sign Language Education Program Courses[b]
5	Bilingual in ASL/Sign English: Highly skilled in both American Sign Language (ASL) and meaning based signing in English word order - Understanding American Sign Language as a Language, Linguistics of Sign Communication, Signing Basic English Idioms, Signing Idiomatic English, Sign Language Interpreting: Consumer Awareness, Introduction to Sign Language Teaching,[c] Public Presentations
4	Advanced Sign Language Skills: Highly skilled in meaning based signing in English word order - American Sign Language for Sign English Users, Linguistics of Sign Communication, Signing Basic English Idioms, Signing Idiomatic English, Sign Language Interpreting: Consumer Awareness, Introduction to Sign Language Teaching,[c] Public Presentations
3	Intermediate Sign Language Skills: Has good control of basic sign vocabulary and appropriately uses some sign grammatical features - Sign Language III or American Sign Language for Sign English Users, Sign Language Interpreting: Consumer Awareness, Public Presentations
2	Basic Sign Language Skills: Able to express and receive simple utterances using everyday sign vocabulary - Sign Language II
1	No or Minimal/Survival Sign Language Skills: No sign skills or able to produce some basic signs and/or fingerspelling - Sign Language I

[a]Independent Study is designed on an individual basis for students with special needs that are not served by Sign Language Education Program courses included in this table.

[b]Appropriate for this table is based on sign language skills only. "Recommended" courses depend on several other factors including student interests/motivation and other communication and language skills and needs.

[c]Students successfully completing "Introduction to Sign Language Teaching" may enroll in "Teaching Sign Language Practicum".

Attachment 4

Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI) Results and Recommendations Form

Student: _____ Social Security #: _____

SLPI Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Career Counselor: _____

Language/Communication Background Questionnaire Results:

Sign Language Self-Rating: _____ Preferred Communication Mode: _____

SIPI Rating: _____

Course Recommendations(s)

_____(101) Sign Language I
_____(103) Sign Language II
_____(105) Sign Language III
_____(111) ASL for Sign English (SE) Users
_____(131) Signing Basic English Idioms
_____(133) Signing Idiomatic English
_____(135) Public Presentations
_____(141) Understanding ASL as a Language (SIPI 5)
_____(145) Linguistics of Sign Communication
_____(151) Sign Language Interpreting: Consumer Awareness
_____(161) Introduction to Sign Language Teaching (SIPI 4 or 5)
_____(163) Practicum in Teaching Sign Language
_____(399-01) Independent Study - Sign Communication
_____Other _____

_____No Sign Language Education Program Course recommended at this time.

L/CBQ Responses and SIPI Appointment Information Agree: Yes _____No

If No, please explain: _____

_____

_____

Other comments: _____

_____

_____

Attachment 5

Sign Instruction Placement Interview (SIPI) Referral Form

To: _____ Social Security #: _____

From: _____, Communication Seminar Instructor

Date: _____

Your Language/Communication Background Questionnaire (L/CBQ) sign language self-rating is

_____

I recommend that you take the Sign Instructor Placement Interview (SIPI) because (check all that apply):

_____ (A) You may have better sign language skills than indicated by your L/CBQ sign language self-rating.

_____ (B) You want to take a Sign Language Education Program course.

_____ (C) I wasn't able to answer all of your questions about sign language instruction at NTID.

_____ (D) You may have special needs for sign language instruction (please explain).

_____

_____

_____

(E) Other (please explain) _____

_____

To take an SIPI, go to one of the rooms identified below and sign up on the SIPI schedule on the door:

A.   SIPI Interviewer's Name: _____

Dates for SIPIs: _____

LBJ Room #: _____

B.   SIPI Interviewer's Name: _____

Dates for SIPIs: _____

LBJ Room #: _____

Please take this form to your interview with you and give it to your SIPI interviewer.

Note: Original of this form should be given to refer student and a copy should be sent to **NAME**, SVP Sign Language Program Coordinator, BLDG., ROOM NUMBER.

Appendix C

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB)
Student ASL Interview Guidelines

Barbara Curtis, Frank Caccamise, Tracie Snow, and Katie Bechtold
September 2011 (4th ed.)

1. For student ASL interviews, with the exceptions as noted below, we are using the procedures described in *Section 3A (S3A)* of your *SLPI* materials*, FSDB SLPI: ASL Scheduling and Interviewing Procedures* (Caccamise, Newell, & Curtis, March 2010).

2. Begin interview by explaining to students in ASL that you will be asking her/him some questions and she/he should feel free to ask you questions. Also, encourage students to answer your questions as fully as possible and to add anything they believe is appropriate. If students do not understand use strategies outlined in *S3A.*

Note: No printed instructions are used;

3. You should ask the student questions for three general topics: (a) background/family, (b) school, and (c) interests/hobbies.

4. Similar to your SLPI interviews with staff you may discuss the general topics in any order and you should discuss each topic in depth.

5. One difference from your SLPI interviews with staff is that we have developed a set of five specific questions for each interview topic (see next page). You will be provided a laminated copy of the attached list of questions that you may refer to during your interviews. If possible we would like you to ask all of these questions.

6. Interviews should be conversational and natural - not rigid. Therefore, the attached list of questions should be asked only when appropriate within the overall context of your interviews.

7. Expand on the list of questions attached as appropriate. Include follow-up and other questions as appropriate, including the request, "Please tell me more about that".

FSDB STUDENT ASL INTERVIEW SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Barbara Curtis and Frank Caccamise
4-8-11

BACKGROUND/FAMILY

1. What is your name?

2. How old are you?

3. Where were you born?

4. Where is your home?

5. Please tell me about your family.

6. Please describe what your home looks
   like.

SCHOOL

1. What grade are you in?

2. Who is your teacher?

3. How do you get from your home to school?

4. What subject do you enjoy the most? Why?

5. Please describe your classroom. OR
   Please describe your dormitory room.

INTERESTS/HOBBIES!

1. What do you like to eat?

2. What do you like to do at recess time?!

3. When you are home what do you like to do?

4. Please tell me about a good friend.

5. Please describe your favorite animal.

**FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND (FSDB) STUDENT
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND FORMS**

Barbara, Curtis, Frank Caccamise, Katie Bechtold, Christine Price, and Tracie Snow
April 1, 2012 (6th ed.)

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1. Using FORM 1 (p. 67) type in student's name, interview date, evaluation date, your name, and name of your co-evaluator. The curriculum office will complete remaining information.

2. Your evaluation partner and you work together to reach agreement on information to be included on FORMS 1 to 5 (pp. 67-72) and you record your agreed to information on a single copy of each form.

3. Using FORM 1 (p. 67) watch the interview with your focus on ASL **function** only until your evaluation partner and you are comfortable inserting **X**s for function descriptors that best describe student.

4. Rewind interview video and on FORM 2 (pp. 68-69) analyze and record ASL **form** examples and on FORM 3 (page 70) insert **X**s for **form** descriptors that best describe student. If you do not include examples on FORM 2 for some **form** category items, please insert "None noted" following these items.

   Your evaluation partner and you may wish to first focus on vocabulary knowledge and production and fluency **form** categories, and when these are completed rewind video and focus on grammar and comprehension **form** categories. Remember, you may watch the interview as many times as you wish.

   Use FORM 6 (p. 73) to assist your partner and you in identifying and recording ASL grammar examples.

5. On FORM 4 (p. 71) insert **X**s for up to three (3) priority recommendations for student to improve her/his ASL skills. These recommendations need to be based on what your partner and you have recorded on FORMS 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 67-70).

6. Complete FORM 5 (p. 72): Insert student's name, interview date, and evaluation date if they are not already on FORM 5. Transfer your selected recommendations on FORM 4 to FORM 5 and as appropriate add comments to make your recommendations more specific. Use FORM 7 (pp. 74-75) to assist your partner and you in determining the wording for your recommendation comments.

   Although FORM 7 includes sample recommendations that may be appropriate for some students you evaluate you may need to make changes to these recommendations or you may need to create entirely new recommendations to ensure your recommendations fit each student you evaluate

   Be sure that your recommendations are supported by your **function** and **form** descriptors and examples on FORMS 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 66-70) and please make your recommendations as specific as possible.

7. Please check your forms to ensure that you have completed the information as outlined above.

8. Return all forms and interview video to the ASL Program Office.

Note: If there are any questions about the information you have provided the ASL Program Office will contact you. Thank you for your careful attention to the procedures described above.

FORM 1: Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) Student Identifying Information and American Sign Language (ASL) Function Descriptors

Adapted by Barbara Curtis, Frank Caccamise, Katie Bechtold, & Carrie Cobb from a
Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) form developed by William Newell & Frank Caccamise.
(6th ed.)

Student: **Age:**   **Grade**

Interview Date: **FSDB Entry Date:**   **Residential/Day**

Evaluation Date: **Family Deaf-Hearing Status:**

Evaluators:

FSDB Student ASL Function Descriptors

ELABORATION/LENGTH OF RESPONSES	SENSE OF SHAREDNESS/ SPONTANEITY
☐ In-depth elaboration with excellent detail	☐ Fully acceptable, comfortable, shared/spontaneous; crosstalk, back channel feedback; fully natural
☐ Full elaboration with good to excellent detail	☐ Close to fully acceptable and close to fully comfortable, shared/spontaneous
☐ Generally complete answer with good detail/elaboration	☐ Generally acceptable and generally shared/spontaneous, fairly comfortable
☐ Sometimes elaborated answer, but generally 3-5 sentences	☐ Looks like a conversation, fairly shared with some question/answer; sometimes spontaneous with some confidence
☐ Generally 1-to-3 sentences	☐ Does not feel/look like a conversation; not shared, with many questions by interviewer
☐ Generally 1 sentence, phrase, single sign responses	☐ Many questions, rephrasing, slow, simplified signing
☐ Some short phrase, single sign and fingerspelled responses to a few questions	☐ Even basic questions signed slowly with extensive repetition and rephrasing often misunderstood

A. **STUDENT'S VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE**

Signs knows:

Sign selection errors based on meaning:

Overuse of initialized signs:

Fingerspelled words with standard signs:

B. **STUDENT'S PRODUCTION & FLUENCY/RATE**

Sign production errors:

Fluency/Rate:

Other comments:

C. **STUDENT'S ASL GRAMMAR EXAMPLES**

1) **Indexing, space, body shifts and eye gaze:**
    for comparison/contrast
    to locate and refer to people, places, and objects present
    to refer to people, places, and not present
    for role play

2) **Sign verb movement directionality for:**
    location
    pronoun incorporation
    location and pronoun incorporation

3) **Facial expression and sign movement modification for:**
    size
    degree
    manner
    temporal aspect/time

4) **Repetition of sign verb movement for repeated action:**

5a) **Repetition of sign noun movement for plurals:**
5b) **Vertical sweep for plurals:**
5c) **Horizontal sweep for plurals:**

6) **Number incorporation for:**
    people
    age
    time (may included use of timeline)

7a) Listing on non-dominant hand, body shifts, and pauses for:
      connecting ideas
      separating ideas
      sequencing of events

7b) FINISH, body shifts, and pauses for:
      connecting ideas
      separating ideas
      sequencing of events

8a) Sign word order for
      rhetorical (rh) question
      topic-comment
      conditional
      object-subject-verb

8b) Following signs at end of comments:
      FINISH
      MUST
      CAN
      NOT

9) Classifiers following nouns for:
      description
      location and relationship of people, animals, things, and places
      actions of people, animals, and objects
      how something is used or functions

10) Non-manual signals for:
      negation
      affirmation
      yes-no?
      wh-?
      adjectives and adverbs (puffed cheeks, pursed lips/o-o, mm, pah, cs, th and clenched teeth)

11) Other:

      D.   <u>COMPREHENSION</u>

FORM 3: ASL Form Descriptors[A, B]

Adapted by Barbara Curtis, Frank Caccamise, Katie Bechtold, & Carrie Cobb from a Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Form developed by Frank Caccamise, William Newell, Charlene Crump, & Keith Cagle.

(6th ed.)

Vocabulary Knowledge	Production[B]	Fluency/Rate	Grammar[B, C]	Comprehension
☐ native-like	☐ native-like	☐ native-like	☐ native-like	☐ native-like
☐ very broad	☐ near native-like	☐ near native-like	☐ excellent use of many	☐ excellent for normal rate
☐ broad	☐ very clear	☐ normal to near native-like	☐ good use of many	☐ good for normal rate
☐ fairly broad	☐ clear, a few minor misproductions	☐ normal	☐ fairly good use of many	☐ fairly good for a normal rate with a few repetitions and rephrasing
☐ good for basic	☐ clear, some minor misproductions	☐ near-normal to normal	☐ fairly good use of several	☐ fair for moderate to normal rate with a few to some repetitions and rephrasing
☐ fair for basic	☐ fairly clear; some misproductions	☐ moderate to normal	☐ fairly good use of some	☐ fair for moderate rate with some repetitions and rephrasing
☐ some basic	☐ fairly clear; several misproductions	☐ moderate	☐ fair use of many	☐ fair for slow-to-moderate rate with some repetitions and rephrasing
☐ very basic	☐ some understandable responses with several misproductions	☐ slow to moderate	☐ fair use of several or some	☐ fair for slow rate with some to several repetitions and rephrasing
☐ some very basic signs with fingerspelling for several basic signs	☐ some understandable responses with many misproductions	☐ slow	☐ basic use of some or a few	☐ able to understand with frequent repetition and rephrasing
☐ some very basic signs with fingerspelling for many basic signs	☐ a few understandable responses with many misproductions	☐ very slow	☐ no use	☐ able to understand with extensive repetition and rephrasing and use of mime-like gestures

[A] *SLPI Notebook* Sections 4A and S4B provide examples and general descriptors for each form category on rater worksheets.

[B] In general, use <u>few</u> for 2-to-3, <u>some</u> for 4-to-6, <u>several</u> for 7-to-9, and <u>many</u> for 10 or more.

[C] Conversational strategies such as appropriately requesting clarification, fingerspelling to clarify signs, breaking eye contact/gaze to maintain floor, and correcting one's own errors may be included with "other" (#11) under grammatical features.

Frank Caccamise, Barbara Curtis, Tracie Snow, Maryrose Claussen,
Katie Bechtold, Jennifer Sims, and Angela Johnson

FUNCTION
- [ ] Elaboration
- [ ] Requesting Clarification
- [ ] Staying on Topic
- [ ] Maintain Eye Contact
- [ ] Turn Taking
- [ ] Replying to Wh-??
- [ ] Replying to Why?? and How??

SIGN VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE
- [ ] School
- [ ] Background/Family
- [ ] Interests/Hobbies
- [ ] Sign Meaning

PRODUCTION & FLUENCY/RATE
- [ ] Sign Production
- [ ] Fingerspelling Production
- [ ] Signing Rate
- [ ] Fingerspelling Rate
- [ ] Pausing

ASL GRAMMAR
1. **Indexing, space, body shifts, and eye gaze**:
- [ ] for comparison/contrast
- [ ] to locate and refer to people, places, objects present
- [ ] to refer to people, places, and objects not present
- [ ] for role-play

2. **Sign verb movement directionality for**:
- [ ] location
- [ ] pronoun incorporation
- [ ] location and pronoun incorporation

3. **Facial expression and sign movement modification for**:
- [ ] size
- [ ] degree
- [ ] manner
- [ ] temporal aspect/time

4. [ ] **Repetition of sign verb movement for repeated action**

5A. [ ] **Repetition of sign noun movement for plurals**

5B. [ ] **Vertical sweep for plurals**

5C. [ ] **Horizontal sweep for plurals**

6. **Number incorporation for:**
- [ ] people
- [ ] age
- [ ] time (may include timeline)

7A. **Listing on non-dominant hand, body shifts, and pauses for:**
- [ ] connecting ideas
- [ ] separating ideas
- [ ] sequencing events

7B. **FINISH, body shifts, and pauses for:**
- [ ] connecting ideas
- [ ] separating ideas
- [ ] sequencing events

8A. **Sign word order for:**
- [ ] rhetorical (rh) question
- [ ] topic-comment,
- [ ] conditional
- [ ] object-subject-verb

8B. **Signs at end of comments:**
- [ ] FINISH
- [ ] MUST
- [ ] CAN
- [ ] NOT

9. **Classifiers following nouns for:**
- [ ] description
- [ ] location and relationship of people, animals, things, and places
- [ ] actions of people, animals, and objects
- [ ] how something is used or functions

10. **Non-manual signals for:**
- [ ] negation
- [ ] affirmation
- [ ] yes-no?
- [ ] wh-?
- [ ] adjectives and adverbs (puffed cheeks, pursed lips/o-o, mm, pah, cs, th and clenched teeth)

11. [ ] **Other (insert specifics here):**

12. **Comprehension**
- [ ] moderate rate
- [ ] moderate-to-normal rate
- [ ] normal rate

Form developed by Frank Caccamise, Barbara Curtis, Tracie Snow, Maryrose Claussen,
Katie Bechtold, Angela Johnson, and Jennifer Sims
(6th ed.)

Student:

Interview Date:

Evaluation Date:

Priority Recommendations with Comments:

Note 1: The order of the grammatical features below is the same order as that under STUDENT'S ASL GRAMMAR EXAMPLES on FORM 2: ASL Form Examples (pp.4-5).

Note 2: For additional samples of how ASL grammar may be glossed, see *SLPI Notebook* Sections 4A, 4B, and 6, and in www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi click on "Resources for Evaluators" and then "Video Examples: ASL Grammatical Features."

Note 3: Note importance of word for in information below and on FORM 2.

1. Indexing, space, body shifts, and eye gaze for comparison/contrast, to locate and refer to people, places, and objects present and not present, and role play; TEACHERS-lt., STUDENTS-rt., SCHOOL THERE-ctr. (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23; S4B, p. 4, #6B, S6, p. 1, #1, & pp. 3-6).

2. Sign verb movement directionality for location (HOME GO-lt.; see S4, p. 8, D-4) and pronoun incorporation (TELL-me, me-HELP-them; see S4A, pp. 9, 13, 17, 19; S4B, p. 4, #6C; also, see S6, p. 1, #2, & pp. 20-21).

3. Facial expression and sign movement modification for degree, size, manner, and temporal/time aspect; BEAUTIFUL-really, HOUSE-big, WALK-slowly, STUDY-for-a-long-time (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13; S4B, page 4, #6D; S6, p. 1, #3c-e, & pp. 9-12).

4. Repetition of sign verb movement for repeated action; GO+++, LEARN+++ (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13, 17, 21; S4B, p. 6, #10E; S6, p. 1, #4.)

5. Repetition of sign noun movement and vertical and horizontal sweep for plurals; BOOK+++, MONDAY-sweep, MORNING-sweep (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13, 15, 17; S4B, p. 6, #10E; S6, p. 1, #5a & b, pp. 24-25).

6. Number incorporation for people**,** age, and time **(may include use of timeline):** THREE-OF-US, AGE-5, MONTHS-2, TWO-WEEKS-IN-THE-FUTURE, 3-WEEKS-AGO (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13, 17, 19; S6, p. 1, #6, & p. 23).

7. Listing on non-dominant hand, FINISH, **body shifts, and pauses** for connecting ideas, separating ideas, and sequencing of events (S4A, pp. 9, 15).

8. Sign word order for rhetorical (rh) question, topic-comment, conditional, and object-subject-verb; also, FINISH, MUST, CAN, and NOT at end of comments (S4A, pp. 9, 11; S6, p. 2, #8, pp. 16, 19-20).

9. Classifiers following nouns for (a) description; (b) location and relationship of people, animals, things, and places; (c) actions of people, animals, and objects; and (d) how something is used or functions; CL:GG for shape and thinness; CL:11 for 2 people standing, facing each other; CL:33 for 2 cars racing; CL:S for leading a horse (S4A, pp. 9, 11, 13, 15; S4B, p. 6, #10B; S6, p. 2, #7g, & #11, pp. 29-37).

10. Nonmanual signals for negation, affirmation, yes-no?, wh-?, and adjectives and adverbs (puffed cheeks, pursed lips/o-o, mm, pah, cs, th and clenched teeth) (S4A, pp. 9, 13, 15, 19, 21; S6, p. 1, #3a, b, e, f, #10a & b, p. 2, pp. 6-8, 11-15, & 17-18).

Function - Elaboration: NAME generally responds in 1 to 3 sentences. Work on increasing her length of responses in order to provide more detail when appropriate.

Function - Requesting Clarification: NAME should develop skills for requesting clarification when he does not understand questions; for example, "Please repeat," or "Again please," if he does not understand what is signed.

Function - Maintain Eye Contact: NAME should work on maintaining eye contact as appropriate when receiving and expressing sign language communication; if NAME needs to consider his reply before signing, prior to breaking eye contact he should learn to hold his hand up in a gesture of 'please wait while I think about that.'

Function - Turn Taking: NAME should improve turn taking skills by not interrupting others when they are signing and by keeping his hands up in the signing space until he has completed his replies.

Sign Vocabulary Knowledge - School: NAME should continue to develop his ASL vocabulary knowledge with a focus on school-related signs, including signs important for classroom and dormitory communication.

Sign Vocabulary Knowledge - Sign Meaning: NAME should continue her development of sign language vocabulary with a focus on using signs that communicate correct meaning; for example, RIGHT/CORRECT versus RIGHT (direction), LEFT (past tense LEAVE) versus LEFT (direction), and SOME TIME versus SOMETIMES.

Production and Fluency - Sign Production: NAME should continue to work on improving his sign production with a focus on correcting his production of the following signs: SCHEDULE, ORGANIZE, PREPARE, LIST, RESPONSIBILTIES, BACKGROUND, MISUNDERSTAND, REMEMBER, FORGET, BECAUSE.

Production and Fluency - Fingerspelling Production: NAME needs to improve the clarity of her fingerspelling, to ensure letters at the end of words are included, and to correct production of E, F, G, H, K, and P handshapes.

Production and Fluency - Fingerspelling Production: NAME tends to move his hand forward when fingerspelling. He should work on keeping his hand in a set position near his shoulder when fingerspelling, moving his hand only when appropriate; for example, moving his hand to the side for double letters.

Production and Fluency - Signing Rate: NAME needs to improve his sign production and fluency by signing at a more moderate-to-normal rate with appropriate pausing between ideas.

ASL Grammar #1 - Indexing, space, body shifts, and eye gaze to locate and refer to people, places, and objects not present: NAME should improve her use of this grammatical feature; for example, when explaining about which dormitory building she lives in she could sign GREGG HALL-index rt. and when telling who was at the meeting she could sign TEACHER NAME-lt., STUDENT NAME-center, MOTHER NAME-rt.

ASL Grammar #2 - Sign verb movement directionality for location: NAME should develop skills in using this grammatical feature; for example, when he explains his move to Florida he could sign LIVE NEW-YORK in space to his rt. and then produce MOVE with a rt.-to-lt. movement, shifting his body from rt.-to-lt. and signing FL to his lt...

ASL Grammar #3 - Facial expression and sign movement modification for size: NAME should improve his use of this grammatical feature; for example, when he talks about where NAME grew up he could sign HOMETOWN SMALL-very, with "very" communicated via facial expression and movement modification for SMALL.

ASL Grammar #3 - Facial Expression and sign movement modification for temporal aspect: NAME should develop his skills in using this grammatical feature; for example, when he explains that he has lived in FL for 10 years he could sign "SINCE-for-a-long-time 10 YEARS LIVE FL" with "for-a-long-time" communicated via clenched teeth and slow sign movement.

ASL Grammar #4 - Repetition of sign verb movement for repeated action: NAME should develop skills in using this grammatical feature; for example, rather than signing MOVIE I WATCHED MANY TIMES he could communicate "many times" by repeating sign movement for WATCHED.

ASL Grammar #5A - Repetition of sign movement for plurals: NAME needs to improve use of this grammatical feature; for example, rather than sign THAT ROOM HAS MANY CHAIR NAME she could communicate "many" by producing CHAIR several times in different locations in space.

ASL Grammar #5B - Vertical sweep for plurals: NAME should develop skills in use of this grammatical feature; for example, he could sign IN CLOSET TOWELS-vertical sweep to indicate there are many towels in the closet.

ASL Grammar #5C - Horizontal sweep for plurals: NAME should develop skills in use of this grammatical feature; for example, she could sign SHELF BOOKS- horizontal sweep to indicate there are many books on the shelf.

ASL Grammar #6 - Number incorporation for age and time (may include timeline): NAME should develop skills in using this grammatical feature; for example, instead of signing 6 YEARS OLD, sign AGE-6, and instead of signing TWO YEARS AGO he could use number incorporation and the timeline to sign TWO-YEARS-AGO.

ASL Grammar #7A - Listing on non-dominant hand, body shifts, and pauses for connecting ideas and sequencing events: NAME should develop skills in using this grammatical feature for discussing school subjects and family members and the sequence of events during the school day; this will help her reduce overuse of AND and THEN.

ASL Grammar #8A - Sign word order for rhetorical question: NAME should develop skills in using rhetorical questions; for example, he could use a rhetorical question when talking about why he is on the baseball team- I JOINED BASEBALL TEAM WHY? I LOVE BASEBALL.

ASL Grammar #8B - Signs at end of comments – FINISH, MUST, CAN, NOT: NAME needs to develop skills in consistent use of placing FINISH, MUST, CAN, and NOT at end of comments for emphasis; for example, STUDY FOR TEST MUST and HOMEWORK FINISH, I PLAY OUTSIDE CAN.

ASL Grammar #9 - Classifiers following nouns for description and actions of people, animals and objects: NAME should develop skills in using this grammatical feature; for example, he can use different classifiers to describe differing thicknesses of picture frames (e.g. CL:GG for a thin frame and CL:CC for a thick frame) and he can use classifiers to show a person riding a bike (CL:3 for bicycle with CL: inverted V to show a person on the bicycle).

ASL Grammar #10 - Non-manual signals for negation and affirmation: NAME should make more consistent use of negative and affirmative non-manual signals; for example, pair negative headshake with I DON'T-UNDERSTAND and affirmative head nod with I LIKE SCHOOL.

ASL Grammar #10 - Non-manual signals for yes-no?: NAME needs to improve use of raised eyebrows, tilting the head/shoulder slightly forward, and holding the last sign a bit longer than normal when asking yes-no questions.

ASL Grammar #10 - Non-manual signals for adjectives and adverbs (puffed cheeks, pursed lips/o-o, mm, pah, cs, th and clenched teeth: NAME needs to improve use of non-manual signals; for example, he can use puffed cheeks or clenched teeth to emphasize the point that there was an incredibly large number of people at the fair and he can use the "th" non-manual signal to emphasize he was not paying attention when he fell while walking.

ASL Grammar #12 - Comprehension: NAME should improve comprehension for signing produced at normal rate.

ASL Grammar #12: Comprehension: NAME should improve comprehension for signing produced at a moderate-to- normal rate.

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SLPI PAPER #15:
MONITORING SIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Dr Frank Caccamise
SLPI Co-Developer/Consultant
April 2012 (9th ed.)

Introduction

This SLPI PAPER provides suggestions for monitoring the sign language communication skills development of individuals and their good faith efforts to develop these skills. This PAPER was originally written in September 2000 in response to a request from Cinnie MacDougall, South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) SLPI Coordinator, and it was updated in June 2003 in response to an inquiry from Janice Knauth, American School for the Deaf (ASD) SLPI Coordinator. In considering the inquiries from Cinnie and Janice and my response below it is important to recognize that the SLPI is only one of several options that may and should be used to monitor sign language skills development. In addition workshops, courses, and other activities that address techniques and strategies for effective use of American Sign Language (ASL), simultaneous communication, spoken communication, print and graphics, how to effectively work with interpreters, use of distance communication devices and relay services, and knowledge about American Sign Language (ASL), Deaf Culture, and the Deaf Community should be considered as part of a total program for supporting individuals in their efforts to improve their communication effectiveness.

E-Mail Request from Cinnie MacDougall, South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) To:

To: Dr. Frank Caccamise, SLPI Consultant
From: Cinnie MacDougall, SCSDB SLPI Coordinator
Date: September 6, 2000
Subject: Response to an urgent question
C: SCSDB - Dr. Sheila Breitweiser, President, Carol Mabry, Vice-President, Mary Washko, Department of
            Sign Language Communication Director, Claire Bailey, Sign Language Instructor

Carol, Claire, and I had a meeting with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) people and ADEPT Coordinator today. We discussed how to write up goals in the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) for new employees who have not met their sign language communication skills level standards. Since EPMS is written up annually we face a dilemma of how to benchmark an employee's sign language skills during the three-year timeline for achieving standards. For example, if an employee's rating is Intermediate Range and Advanced is the standard this employee has a three-year timeline. He/she re-takes the SLPI after a year or two and rating is still in Intermediate Range even though he/she has improved in some areas of sign language communication skills. How do we show progress for this employee who has not yet met his/her standard at the Advanced level? It is not a problem for employees with no sign language communication skills at job entry who have a standard of Intermediate since we can use rating of Novice for the first year, Survival for the second year, and Intermediate for the third year. EPMS has to be written in a way to show whether the employee is or is not improving his/her sign language communication skills every year. I hope I am making myself clear.

Your thoughts on this? How do other schools deal with the similar issue if any? We have a deadline to come up with a way of writing the measurement so a prompt response from you would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

E-Mail Request from Janice Knauth, American School for the Deaf (ASD)

To: Dr. Frank Caccamise, SLPI Consultant
From: Janice Knauth, ASD SLPI Coordinator
Date: June 20, 2003
Subject: Documenting Progress and SLPI Ratings

We are still working on our SLPI policy, and someday it will be done!

One of the issues we have relates to not using the SLPI "Plus" ratings. Upon hire there is a preferred/standard and entry skill level requirement. Scenario; an applicant hired for a job with a preferred entry skill of Survival Range and a standard of Intermediate Range has a Survival Range rating at time of job entry. There is a 3-year plan to develop the skills with timelines for improvement at 6 months, 1 year, and 3 years. How would progress be shown without using the Survival Plus other than having some sort of narrative report being done that would document progress? How do other schools handle this? How do you recommend handling this? Some people here at ASD say we need the Plus ratings to show progress before the employee makes it to the next range. I'm looking for some words of wisdom. Please refer to page #s with this one.

Thanks for your help. I hope you all are enjoying better weather than Connecticut is! Will summer ever arrive?

Response to Cinnie and Janice

To: Janice Knauth, ASD SLPI Coordinator
From: Dr. Frank Caccamise, SLPI Consultant
Date: June 20, 2003
Subject: Documenting Progress and SLPI Ratings

It took me some time to locate the information below, which was originally written in September 2000 to Cinnie MacDougall, South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB) SLPI Coordinator at the time. As noted I have made some edits to hopefully make this more meaningful and clear to you all at ASD. I do hope the my edited reply to Cinnie is helpful and please contact me if I may be of further assistance.

To: Cinnie MacDougall, SCSDB SLPI Coordinator
From: Dr. Frank Caccamise, SLPI Consultant
Date: Sept 7, 2000 (edits made in June & July 2003, as noted above, & May 2007)
Subject: Response to an Urgent Question
C: SCSDB - Dr. Sheila Breitweiser, President, Carol Mabry, Vice-President, Mary Washko, Department of
              Sign Language Communication Director, Claire Bailey, Sign Language Instructor

Cinnie, you are very clear.

I think it is helpful to begin by noting and reviewing pages and sections in your SCSDB employee sign language philosophy, policy, and procedures documents that contain information important to your question:

1.   In Philosophy and Policy document the following statement near the top of page 4 is critical:
     "...employees must participate in the SLPI procedures on a regular basis until they have achieved their skill level standards and their expectations for taking the SLPI on a regular basis."

2.   In Procedures document, see, sub-sections II, III-A and B, VIII , and IX. Sub-section VIII, "Skill Levels
      Standards and Schedule for (Re) Taking SLPI", contains Bill Newell's and my best thinking on how to ensure maintenance of skills without placing undue burden on either persons taking the SLPI or on program resources. On page 8 see the four principles at the beginning of sub-section VIII and the following key statement on page 9, "Employees with sign language communication skill level standards must take the SLPI within two year time frames until they achieve their standards".

3. Taking into consideration what is stated in your staff sign language policy and procedures documents, my experiences with and knowledge of other programs, and my experiences as a student and instructor of ASL, I recommend that you use sub-section VIII and your Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) (see sub-section IX of your procedures document) for monitoring efforts and progress of staff toward achieving their standards. In addition to SLPI results, as indicated in sub-sections VIII and IX, these efforts and progress may include successful completion of sign language courses, workshops, and other sign language communication learning and development experiences.

4. One of your examples is an employee who is in the Intermediate Range and may show no change in their SLPI rating for two years yet they may be improving. Options for documenting this improvement include successful completion of sign language courses and workshops and you could request sign language instructors to write brief statements describing improvements. For example, "During September-December, 2000, Bill Jones attended all 14 class sessions for ASL II. During this course Bill has expanded his knowledge of basic and work related sign language vocabulary, showed improved use of space and indexing for comparison and contrast, developed basic to fair use of several classifiers, and improved his receptive skills for sign language produced at a moderate-to-normal rate."

5. Considering your other example it is true that for an employee with no skills you could "benchmark" Novice for the first year, Survival for the second year, and Intermediate for the third. However, I do not recommend this. Your current procedures address this situation in sub-section V-A, #1b (page 5); that is, new employees having no sign language skills sign a form that includes a statement that they will enroll in an introductory sign language course and take the SLPI within 15 months of their job entry dates. At this point your EPMS can be used to plan what is appropriate for "each" employee. Trying to "benchmark" progress by use of the SLPI only, including one level rating differences, would place a tremendous strain on your SLPI resources. In addition it is important to remember that each SLPI rating has a range; for example, an employee could be a low or high Survival, a low or high Intermediate, or a low or high Advanced level signer.

6. For employees below their standards written suggestions for improving sign language communication skills may be provided during SLPI Follow-Up Meetings. Employees could then share these recommendations to assist in selection of appropriate courses and workshops for them, and their instructors could use these recommendations as a base for their statements as discussed in #4 above.

The above is consistent with Bill Newell's and my preference that the focus is on an integrated employee/staff sign language communication skills assessment-development program and not the SLPI only. In brief, the focus is on use of SLPI results to assist employees/staff members in planning sign language communication skill development opportunities that are appropriate for each of them. True, if skills development up to the standard skill level is not achieved SLPI results may influence job continuance. Initial focus, however, is and should be on use of SLPI results to assist with planning skills development with each employee/staff member. Putting it another way, with or without the SLPI there would still be a need for a SCSDB Staff Sign Language Communication Skills Assessment-Development Program.

Cinnie, I hope the above is clear and please contact me if any questions and/or you wish to discuss.

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SLPI PAPER #16: OPTIONS FOR REPORTING SLPI RATINGS

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
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Introduction

As shown on the next page the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale has 11 rating levels:

1.   Superior Plus

2.   Superior

3.   Advanced Plus

4.   Advanced

5.   Intermediate Plus

6.   Intermediate

7.   Survival Plus

8.   Survival

9.   Novice Plus

10.   Novice

11.   No Functional Skills

In this PAPER we discuss options for reporting some SLPI results as rating ranges and we discuss factors to consider in selecting the SLPI "specific" ratings and "rating ranges" to be reported. However, although a rating range may be reported to persons taking the SLPI, individual raters should provide specific ratings when resources allow this. There are several reasons for this including: (1) this helps SLPI raters to maintain their skills in rating across the entire SLPI Rating Scale, (2) this helps to identify if raters are able to distinguish between all ratings across the SLPI Rating Scale, (3) this provides SLPI Coordinators with information that may inform planning for SLPI Team member individual and group in-service training, and (4) this means if a program decides to no longer use rating ranges "specific" ratings may be able to be determined for individuals whose results have been reported as ranges.

SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RATING SCALE[a, b]

RATINGS	DESCRIPTORS[c]
Superior Plus	**Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** All aspects of signing are native-like.
Superior	**Able to have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Advanced	**Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics.** 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.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate	**Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences.** 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.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival	**Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length.** 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.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Novice	**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.** 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.
No Functional Skills	**(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.**

SLPI Advanced Plus-Superior Plus and
No Functional Skills-Novice Rating Ranges Option

After several years of experience we began recommending that the Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus ratings be reported as a single rating range. The rationale for this is provided in SLPI PAPER #18: *Principles for Development and Refinement of Sign Language Communication Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*, Principles 10-through-13:

10. ADVANCED PLUS OR ABOVE SKILLS AS A STANDARD: The highest standard you should establish for a job is Advanced Plus. Advanced Plus should be a standard only for persons in job positions such as sign language teachers, interpreters (though interpreter certification is preferred for interpreters) and possibly job positions requiring direct communication within critical one-to-one and small group communication situations (for example, mental health and drug counselors).

11. ADVANCED PLUS and SUPERIOR RANGE SIGNERS EXCELLENT COMMUNICATORS: Persons with SLPI ratings of Advanced Plus and persons with SLPI ratings in the Superior Range are all excellent sign language communicators. The primary difference between these two groups is "form"; that is, Superior Range signers consistently show native-like/near native-like form while Advanced Plus level signers (sometimes) show minor form differences that are consistent with adult learners of sign languages. These differences are similar to persons' accents in second/adult learned spoken languages with these accents resulting from the influence of their native spoken languages on pronunciation/production of the second/adult learned languages. The important point is that Advanced Plus and Superior Range signers are excellent communicators and very good to excellent sign language models. Therefore, considering the above, the difficult, time consuming, and resource consuming task of distinguishing among Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus signers, and PRINCIPLES #10, #12, and #13, we recommend that when conducting ratings and establishing standards the Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus ratings be combined and reported as a single rating range; that is, *Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range*.

12. SKILL LEVELS OF SKILLED, EXPERIENCED INTERPRETERS AND SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS WHO ARE ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS: Our experience with the SLPI has shown that skilled, experienced interpreters and ASL teachers who are adult sign language learners most often achieve ratings of Advanced Plus and sometimes achieve ratings of Superior. This supports that Superior Plus is a very exclusive rating that is generally achieved only by native signers. It also supports that Advanced Plus is a skill level that a select number of adult sign language learners will achieve and that Superior is a skill level that a very select number of adult sign language learners will achieve.

13. PRIMARY USE OF THE SLPI IS WITH ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS: Like the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), the assessment tool that the SLPI is based on, the primary SLPI use is for assessment of adult language learners with the highest rating scale level range (Superior/Superior Plus) based on knowledgeable native/native-like language users. This range is what adult language learners look to as their model but they generally do not achieve, and are not expected to achieve, this

highest skill level range. In brief the Superior Rating Range for both the L/OPI and the SLPI is basically a theoretical construct that provides the "upper" anchor for both the L/OPI and SLPI Rating Scales.

In addition we now suggest that programs may wish to report No Functional Skills (NFS) and Novice be reported as a range; that is NFS-Novice Range. The rationale for this is that whether a person receives a rating of NFS or Novice the recommendation for sign language skills development will be the same; that is, enroll in a basic sign language course.

For programs adopting the above, SLPI official ratings are reported as follows:

1. Advanced Plus to Superior Plus Range
2. Advanced
3. Intermediate Plus
4. Intermediate
5. Survival Plus
6. Survival
7. Novice Plus
8. No Functional Skills-Novice Range,
   Note: No Skills may included as part of Range #8; that is, No Skills to Novice Rating Range.

The above option is appropriate for programs that use SLPI ratings to help determine placement in ASL courses. For example, in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) Staff ASL Program staff with No Sign Skills to SLPI Novice Level Rating are enrolled in ASL 1, staff with SLPI Novice Plus and Survival Ratings in ASL 2, staff with SLPI Survival Plus and Intermediate Ratings in ASL 3, and staff with SLPI Intermediate and Advanced Ratings in ASL 4. Texas School for the Deaf has adopted similar ASL course placement expectations for their staff.

<div align="center">Another Option for Reporting SLPI Ratings Considering the
Concept of Plus Level Ratings</div>

Given the variety of reasons for SLPI use and given the introduction of the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure (see SLPI PAPER #9, *Options for Conducting and Sharing Results of SLPI Ratings*), we have considered other options for reporting SLPI results.

One of these options is the following:

1. Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range
2. Intermediate Plus–Advanced Range
3. Survival Plus–Intermediate Range
4. Novice Plus–Survival Range
5. No Functional Skills (NFS)-Novice Range

In addition to what was discussed earlier about the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Rating Range and the NFS-Novice Rating Range the option immediately above is based on what is meant by plus ratings their importance to effective use of sign language for communication. By definition plus ratings are related to the next higher rating level; that is, candidates' exhibit some of the skills of the next higher rating level but not all and not consistently.' Therefore, generally candidates rated Survival Plus are more like candidates rated Intermediate than candidates rated

Survival, and generally candidates who are rated Intermediate Plus are more like candidates rated Advanced than candidates rated Intermediate. In addition, results of a study by Long, Stinson, Kelly, and Liu (1999) showed that NTID students' perceptions of "ease of communication in the classroom" were highest for instructors with SLPI ratings in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Rating Range, followed by instructors in the Intermediate Plus-Advanced Range with instructors in the Survival Plus-Intermediate Range receiving the lowest ratings for communication ease. For the two ratings "within" each of these three SLPI rating ranges students did not make distinctions for ease of communication. Based on the construct of the SLPI students in the Long et al. study probably were viewing the functional communication of instructors within these three ranges as nearly the same and not counting as heavily the "form" distinctions which are made in SLPI ratings.

Additional support for reporting ranges of Survival Plus-Intermediate and Intermediate Plus–Advanced comes from the rating construct associated with the SLPI; that is, functional communication is always the first criterion in a rating decision with analysis of form either supporting or pulling the rating down. Therefore, it is often the case that candidates receiving Survival Plus ratings are functioning at the Intermediate level with their form not quite supporting an Intermediate rating. The same is true for the rating range Intermediate Plus–Advanced. This rating construct is reflected in the following two principles from SLPI PAPER #18: *Principles for Development and Refinement of Sign Language Communication Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*:

2. JOB ENTRY SKILL LEVELS, STANDARDS, AND JOB COMMUNICATION NEEDS:

    A. Types and frequency of job communication situations in which sign language is used should be considered when establishing job entry skill levels and standards.

    B. All established skill levels (entry, standards, additional goals, incentive levels, etc.) should -

        1) Be of benefit to work and social communication needs and goals within the environment for which the skill levels are established.

        2) Consider appropriate use of program assessment and skill development resources.

14. INTERMEDIATE OR SURVIVAL PLUS LOWEST SKILL LEVEL STANDARD RECOMMENDED

    A. The lowest skill level standard we recommend is Intermediate or Survival Plus. The reasons for this are:

        1) Intermediate is the first SLPI rating level at which a person has the sign language skills needed to participate in a conversation with some confidence.

        2) Survival level signers and below require on-going support to maintain their skills thus placing undue stress both on resources available for developing and maintaining sign language communication skill and on assessment services.

3) Because functional communication is always the first criterion in a rating decision with analysis of "form" either supporting or pulling the rating down it is often the case that candidates receiving Survival Plus ratings are functioning at the Intermediate level with their form not quite supporting an Intermediate rating.

B. Rather than establish the Survival skill level (or below) as a standard we recommend that staff participate in professional development activities such as those listed below with participation in SLPI procedures optional:

1) Workshops on techniques/strategies for communicating effectively with Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing people; for example, use of environmental cues, natural gestures, writing, distance communication devices, and relay services.

2) Workshops that provide and discuss information and strategies for effectively working with interpreters.

3) Workshops on Deaf culture and community.

4) Successful completion of an approved program sign language communication skills development experience (generally two sign language courses) or achieving an Intermediate or Survival Plus SLPI rating.

The plus range reporting option may be useful when establishing standards for job positions where a "Survival" or "Intermediate" rating is considered not to be adequate to perform the job but the Survival Plus-Intermediate Range or the Intermediate Plus-Advanced Range is considered acceptable. To illustrate, suppose a program wishes to use a range reporting system to conserve resources devoted to the overall SLPI procedures. Further, suppose that in setting the standard for houseparent staff a person with an Intermediate Rating would not be considered sufficiently skilled to perform the job. However, if an Intermediate Plus Rating would be considered satisfactory, the rating range of "Intermediate Plus–Advanced" would satisfy this circumstance.

When both the Intermediate Plus and Advanced skill levels are established as standards SLPI results may appropriately be reported as follows:

1. Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range
2. Advanced
3. Intermediate Plus
4. Survival Plus–Intermediate Range
5. Novice Plus–Survival Range
6. No Functional Skills-Novice Range

Two Rating Range Option for Reporting Ratings When SLPI Used as a Screening Tool

Another option when the SLPI is being used as a screening tool is to set two rating ranges; that is, "at or above the screening level" or "below the screening level". For example, if the screening level is Intermediate Plus results for an individual would be reported as "Intermediate Plus or Above Skill Level Range" or "Below the Intermediate Plus Skill Level". If resources allow, although this option involves reporting results to individuals as one of two ranges, consistent with what is stated earlier in this PAPER, individual raters should provide "specific" ratings.

Conclusion

When applying an SLPI rating report option within the context of implementing a sign language program policy there are many factors to consider, including the goals of the policy, entry skill level expectations and standards, allocation of resources, and whether the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure, SLPI Two Rater Team Procedure, or SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure is being used. If the SLPI is being used in a context where the primary emphasis is on professional development an SLPI rating reporting system that includes the No Sign Skills-Novice Range and the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range with all other SLPI Rating Scale ratings reported as exact rating levels may be most appropriate. The rationale for this is that the greater the number of exact rating levels reported the more often people taking the SLPI will see improvements in their sign language communication skills reflected in their SLPI ratings. Ranges under such circumstances may become a disincentive to people who are trying hard to improve their sign language communication skills; that is, if too many ranges are used progress may not be discernable from one administration of the SLPI to another although real changes in sign language communication skills may have occurred. If the SLPI is being used when there is a need to allocate resources judiciously or it is being used as a screening tool the use of more ranges may be appropriate. Finally, the SLPI Two and Three Rater Team Procedures lend themselves to reporting a greater number of exact rating levels than does the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure though this should not be the primary factor in determining the most appropriate SLPI rating reporting system for a program.

There are many factors to consider in reaching a decision for the most appropriate rating report option and we encourage programs to carefully consider their sign language program goals, sign language communication entry skill level expectations and standards, resources, and other factors important to their use of the SLPI. Whatever option is selected, as stated in the introduction to this PAPER, although a rating range may be reported to persons taking the SLPI, when resources allow raters should provide specific ratings.

Reference

Long, G., Stinson, M., Kelly, R., & Liu, Y. The relationship between teacher sign skills and student evaluations of teacher capability. *American Annals of the Deaf, 144* (5), 354-364.

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**SLPI PAPER #17: FACTORS IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT
OF SIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM
PHILOSOPHY, POLICY, AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENTS**

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
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September 2011 (8th edition) Introduction

This SLPI PAPER provides a list of factors to consider for development and refinement of sign language program philosophy, policy, and procedures documents. A set of principles to assist you in making decisions for these factors are discussed in SLPI PAPER #18, *Principles for Development and Refinement of Sign Language Program Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*. References to these principles are provided with the factors listed in this SLPI PAPER. It is important that these factors and principles are considered, applied, modified, and added to within the context of program goals, resources, and other factors that may influence SLPI use. In addition, information and model documents to assist in the development of sign language program philosophy, policy, and procedures documents is provided in the Policies, Procedures & Research part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

Factors

1. Reasons and goals for sign language program philosophy, policy, and procedures documents.

2. Influence of job entry date and date policy approved (see PRINCIPLE #1).

3. Amount and type of communication (teaching, counseling, etc.) with people who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (students, community, other staff, parents, etc.), communication situations (group and one-to-one), and communication content (see PRINCIPLE #2).

4. Required or expected and preferred sign language communication job entry skill levels (see PRINCIPLES #3 and #4).

5. Timeline(s) for achieving sign language communication skill level standards (see PRINCIPLES #1, #5, #6, and #7).

6. Influence of job position on entry sign language communication skill levels and standards (see PRINCIPLES #8, #9, and #10).

7. Highest and lowest sign language communication skill level standards to be established (see PRINCIPLES #10-to-#14).

8. Options for staff not having sign language communication skill level standards (see Principle #14B).

9. Consider a "team concept" if a diverse population of students and/or clients is being provided SLPI services (see PRINCIPLE #15).

10. Sign language communication skill level standards, skill levels achieved, and expectations for (re)taking the SLPI (see PRINICPLE #16).

11. Options if individual does not or is unable to achieve sign language communication skill level standards (see PRINCIPLES #1, #17, and #18).

12. Resources (instructors, materials, time, etc.) available for conducting sign language assessment services and providing support for sign language communication skills development. If faculty/staff/employee sign language communication skills are being assessed it is strongly recommended that this be accomplished within the context of an integrated Faculty/Staff/Employee Sign Language Communication Skills Assessment and Development Program.

13. Procedures for determining fairness of job entry skill levels and standards (see PRINCIPLES #7, #19, and #20).

14. Community/External Group Assessment Services: If SLPI services are to be provided for Community/External Groups a policy and procedures document (or documents) should be developed. In addition to persons taking the SLPI these documents should specify all persons that will automatically receive copies of SLPI results.

15. See all PAPERS in this document, *Responses to Frequently Asked Questions about the SLPI*, for additional information that may be helpful to your development of sign language communication philosophy, policy, and procedures documents.

SLPI PAPER #18: PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT OF SIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, POLICY, AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENTS

Frank Caccamise and William Newell
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September 2011 (11th edition) Introduction

This SLPI PAPER provides principles to consider for development and refinement of sign language program philosophy, policy, and procedures documents. It is important that these principles are considered, applied, modified, and added to within the context of the goals, resources, and other factors specific to each program implementing SLPI use. These principles are intended to assist programs in making decisions for the factors that are discussed in SLPI PAPER #17, *Factors Important to Development and Refinement of Sign Language Program Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*.

The principles in this PAPER are written from the perspective that sign language communication entry skill levels and standards are being considered for job positions. We are aware that the SLPI is being used for other purposes including as a screening for entrance into interpreter training programs, as a screening for student teacher and intern applicants, college/university Deaf Education majors, and state teacher licensure. Many of the principles below relate to these latter uses as well. (For example, see PRINCIPLES #3A and #4A.)

Principles

1. POLICY, ENTRY SKILL LEVELS, SKILL LEVEL STANDARDS OR GOALS AND JOB ENTRY DATES:

   A. For faculty/staff/employees with job entry dates <u>prior to</u> policy approved a pure professional development model should be used with faculty/staff/employees encouraged and supported to participate in sign language assessment and skills development opportunities as appropriate.

   B. For faculty/staff/employees entering job positions with standards or goals <u>after</u> policy Approved -

      1) If job positions have entry skill levels these levels should be stated as expected with a waiver procedures necessary if persons hired do not satisfy expected entry skill levels.
      2) Standards/goals should be stated as expected within a specified timeline (generally three or four years).
      3) Participation in sign language communications skills development opportunities should be required on an annual basis until standards/goals are achieved.
      4) They should take the SLPI on a regular basis until they achieve their standards (see PRINCIPLE #16).

C.   Other options for staff entering job positions before and after policy approved include different skill level standards/goals and different timelines.

D.   If changes in sign language communication skill level expectations are included in a revised policy faculty/staff/employees in job positions at time of policy change should never have required skill levels increased.

2.   JOB ENTRY SKILL LEVELS, STANDARDS OR GOALS AND JOB COMMUNICATION NEEDS:

A.   Types and frequency of job communication situations in which sign language is used should be considered when establishing job entry skill levels and standards.

B.   All established skill levels (job entry, standards/goals, incentive levels, etc.) should -

    1)   Be of benefit to work and social communication needs and goals within the environment for which the skill levels are established.
    2)   Consider appropriate use of program assessment and skill development resources.

Note: See PRINCIPLES #6, #9, #10-to #14, and #19.

3.   REQUIRED OR EXPECTED AND PREFERRED SKILL LEVELS AT JOB ENTRY:

A.   It is sometimes appropriate to establish both required or expected skill levels at time of job entry and preferred skill levels at time of job entry.

    Note: Also, see PRINCIPLE #4A.

B.   The preferred skill level at time of job entry and the skill level standard/goal for a job position should be the same.

C.   Policies guiding SLPI use should include a statement that required/expected sign language skills at time of hire may be waived if there are no qualified applicants who satisfy requirement/expectations. If this does occur the timeline for achieving standards/goals may need to be adjusted and a short-term contract may be offered.

    Note: See PRINCIPLE #17B.

D.   Job announcements and hire letters should include statements of job entry required or expected sign language skill levels, job entry preferred skill levels, and skill level standards/goals.

4. PROVISIONAL AND PERMANENT LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION SKILL LEVEL STANDARDS:

   A. When used for licensure/certification consideration should be given to establishing both a provisional licensure/certification skill level standard and a permanent licensure/certification skill level standard.

   B. Similar to the concept of a job entry skill level at time of hire the provisional skill level should be viewed as an entry skill level for persons who are beginning their professional careers with the permanent skill level standard similar to the preferred skill level; that is, like the preferred skill level the skill level for permanent licensure/certification should be the standard.

      Note: See PRINCIPLE #3.

   C. If a single licensure/certification standard is established and this is an "entry level standard" then this standard should be considered a minimal skill level standard, not a preferred skill level standard.

5. SKILL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS AT JOB ENTRY AND STANDARDS: In addition to types and frequency of job communication situations for which sign language is used job entry skill level expectations influence:

   A. Skill level standards/goals and incentive skill levels that may be reasonably established.

   B. The timelines within which attainment of these skill levels may be reasonably expected.

   Note: See PRINCIPLES #6 and #17.

6. STANDARDS/GOALS, SKILL LEVELS AT TIME OF JOB ENTRY, AND TIMELINES:

   A. If the skill level standard/goal is Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range this level should be required at time of job entry. One exception based on SLPI results is interpreters. These preliminary results have shown that interpreters who are Advanced at the time of job entry are able to achieve Advanced Plus within two years. While it is true that the SLPI assesses one skill important for persons providing interpreting services having high-level sign language skills does not mean a person will be able to provide quality-interpreting services. For interpreter positions, therefore, interpreter certification, rather than an SLPI skill level, is preferred at time of job entry. If this is not possible interpreter certification should be required within a specified time from job entry date.

      Note: See PRINCIPLES #10, #11, and #12.

B. If the skill level standard/goal is Advanced the minimal skill level at time of hire should be Intermediate.

C. If the skill level standard/goal is Intermediate or below skill level at time of job entry may be optional depending on the immediate communication requirements of the job.

Note: See PRINCIPLE #9C.

D. If a person has no sign language communication skills at time of job entry the timelines for achieving SLPI rating levels should be consistent with the following: (1) Survival - 2 years, (2) Intermediate – 3 years, (3) Advanced - 4-to-5 years.

Note 1: Programs generally establish a single timeline of three or four years to achieve all standards/goals not required/expected at job entry.
Note 2: Shorter timelines may be appropriate when program resources allow intensive sign language instruction to be provided for new faculty/staff/employees. (See PRINCIPLE #17.)

7. REASONABLE STANDARDS/GOALS AND TIMELINES: For each job position the skill level standard/goal and the timeline within which to achieve this standard/goal should be reasonably attainable by a significant percentage of persons in and/or applying for the position; minimum of 80% generally.

Note: See PRINCIPLES #19 and #20.

8. GENERAL STANDARD/GOAL FOR TEACHERS: If primary job responsibility is teaching students who are Deaf the recommended skill level standard/goal is Advanced.

9. STANDARDS/GOALS FOR ADMINISTRATORS/SUPERVISORS AT TIME OF JOB ENTRY:

A. Administrators/supervisors should be at their skill level standards/goals at time of job entry. This principle is based on the following: (1) administrators/supervisors should serve as model communicators, (2) they should have been successful in developing the skills needed to perform effectively in job positions held prior to becoming an administrator/supervisor, (3) they should be able to communicate directly with faculty/staff/employees who are Deaf, and (4) their job responsibilities generally allow for minimum time to be devoted to development of sign language communication skills.

B. Professional academic administrators/supervisors generally should have a skill level standard/goal of Advanced at job entry.

C. General staff administrators/supervisors generally should have a skill level standard/ goal of Intermediate at job entry.

10. ADVANCED PLUS OR ABOVE SKILLS AS A STANDARD/GOAL: The highest standard/goal you should establish for a job is Advanced Plus. Advanced Plus should be a standard/goal only for persons in job positions such as sign language teachers, interpreters (though interpreter certification is preferred for interpreters) and possibly job positions requiring direct communication within critical one-to-one and small group communication situations; for example, mental health and drug counselors.

 NOTE: See PRINCIPLES #6A, #11, and #12.

11. ADVANCED PLUS AND SUPERIOR RANGE SIGNERS EXCELLENT COMMUNICATORS: Persons with SLPI ratings of Advanced Plus and persons with SLPI ratings in the Superior Range are all excellent sign language communicators. The primary difference between these two groups is "form"; that is, Superior Range signers consistently show native-like/near native-like form while Advanced Plus level signers (sometimes) show minor form differences that are consistent with adult learners of sign languages. These differences are similar to persons' accents in second/adult learned spoken languages with these accents resulting from the influence of second/adult learners' native spoken languages on pronunciation/production of the second/adult learned languages. The important point is that Advanced Plus and Superior Range signers are excellent communicators and very good to excellent sign language models. Therefore, considering the above, the difficult and time/resource consuming task of distinguishing among Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus signers, and PRINCIPLE #10 and PRINCIPLE #12 we recommend that when conducting ratings and establishing standards/goals the Advanced Plus, Superior, and Superior Plus ratings be combined and reported as a single rating range; that is, *Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range*.

12. SKILL LEVELS OF SKILLED, EXPERIENCED INTERPRETERS AND SIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS WHO ARE ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS: Our experience with the SLPI has shown that skilled, experienced interpreters and ASL teachers who are adult sign language learners most often achieve ratings of Advanced Plus and sometimes achieve ratings of Superior. This supports that Superior Plus is a very exclusive rating that is generally achieved only by native signers. It also supports that Advanced Plus is a skill level that a select number of adult sign language learners will achieve and that Superior is a skill level that a very select number of adult sign language learners will achieve.

13. PRIMARY USE OF THE SLPI IS WITH ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS: Like the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), the assessment tool that the SLPI is based on, primary SLPI use is for assessment of adult language learners with the highest rating scale level range (Superior/Superior Plus) based on knowledgeable native/native-like language users. This range is what adult language learners look to as their model but they generally do not achieve and are not expected to achieve this highest skill level range. In brief, the Superior Rating Range for both the L/OPI and the SLPI is basically a theoretical construct that provides the "upper" anchor for both the L/OPI and SLPI Rating Scales.

14. INTERMEDIATE OR SURVIVAL PLUS LOWEST SKILL LEVEL STANDARD/GOAL RECOMMENDED

   A. The lowest skill level standard/goal we recommend is Intermediate or Survival Plus. The reasons for this are:

      1) Intermediate is the first SLPI rating level at which a person has the sign language skills needed to participate in a conversation with some confidence.

      2) Survival level signers and below require on-going support to maintain their skills thus placing undue stress both on resources available for developing and maintaining sign language communication skill and on assessment services.

      3) Because functional communication is always the first criterion in a rating decision with analysis of form either supporting or pulling the rating down it is often the case that candidates receiving Survival Plus ratings are functioning at the Intermediate level, with their form not supporting an Intermediate rating.

   B. Rather than establish the Survival skill level (or below) as a standard/goal we recommend that staff participate in professional development activities such as those listed below with participation in the SLPI procedures optional:

      1) Workshops on techniques/strategies for communicating effectively with Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing people (for example, use of environmental cues, natural gestures, writing, distance communication, and relay services).

      2) Workshops that provide and discuss information and strategies for effectively working with interpreters.

      3) Workshops on Deaf culture and community.

      4) Successful completion of an approved program sign language communication skills development experience (generally two sign language courses) OR achieving an Intermediate SLPI rating.

   Note: See PRINCIPLE #2.

15. TEAM CONCEPT: Programs that serve a diverse population of students/clients require a diverse group of faculty/staff/employees working as a team with students/clients. Such programs should consider this diversity and concept of TEAM when establishing standards. For example, for two administrative positions in the same department:

    A.   One position could have a standard/goal and preferred or required entry skill level of Advanced and the other position a standard/goal of Intermediate with no entry skill level required.

    B.   One position could have a standard/goal and preferred or required entry skill level of Advanced and the other position no skill level standard/goal.

16. SKILL LEVEL STANDARDS/GOALS, SKILL LEVELS ACHIEVED, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR (RE)TAKING THE SLPI:

    A.   Faculty/Staff/Employees with skill level standards/goals should take the SLPI within every two years (or "three years" if program resources do not allow two year time frame) until they achieve their standards/goals.

    B.   Faculty/Staff/Employees achieving a rating in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range and those achieving Advanced should be exempt from taking the SLPI again on a regular basis.

    C.   If program resources allow faculty/staff/employees with sign language communication skill level standards/goals of Intermediate Plus or below who do not achieve an Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range rating or an Advanced rating should be expected to achieve their standards/goals twice in succession on SLPIs administered two or three years apart prior to becoming exempt from taking the SLPI on a regular basis.

    D.   Unless there are extenuating circumstances candidates should have a minimum of six months between SLPI interviews. The primary reason for this is that moving from one SLPI Rating Scale to the next rating skill level generally requires a minimum of six months with this time frame increasing as one proceeds up the SLPI Rating Scale rating skill levels.

17. REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR TIMELINE EXTENSIONS FOR ACHIEVING SKILL LEVEL STANDARDS/GOALS:

A. If dismissal from job is a possibility for staff members/employees not achieving their skill level standards/goals policy and procedures guiding use of these standards/goals should include a review procedures that considers possible extension of the timelines for achieving standards/goals.

B. Timeline-Extension Guidelines: If there are no qualified applicants having the required or expected entry skill level at time of job entry guidelines for considering timeline extensions are as follows -

   1) If entry skill level and standard/goal are both Advanced Plus—

      a. If applicant has Advanced skills at hire s/he has two years to achieve Advanced Plus or Above skills.
      b. If applicant has Intermediate range skills at hire s/he has three years to achieve Advanced Plus or Above skills.
      c. No applicant with below Intermediate range skills should be considered for hire.

   2) If entry skill level and standard/goal are both Advanced—

      a. If applicant has Intermediate range skills at hire s/he has two years to achieve Advanced or Above skills.
      b. If applicant has Survival range skills at hire s/he has three years to achieve Advanced or Above skills.
      c. If applicant has Below Survival range skills at hire s/he has four years to achieve Advanced or Above skills.

   3) If entry skill level is Intermediate and standard/goal skill level is Advanced—

      a. If applicant has Survival range skills at hire s/he has three years to achieve Advanced or Above skills.
      b. If applicant has below Survival range skills at hire s/he has four years to achieve Advanced or Above skills.

   4) If entry skill level and standard/goal are both Intermediate—

      a. If applicant has Survival range skills at hire s/he has two years to achieve Intermediate or Above skills.
      b. If applicant has below Survival range skills s/he has three years to achieve Intermediate or Above skills.

Note: As stated earlier programs generally establish a single timeline of three or four years to achieve all standards/goals not required/expected at job entry. (See PRINCPLE #6.)

18. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:

Policies and procedures should also include statements that address principles and procedures for reasonable accommodation requests.

19. ETHICAL VALIDITY: It is important in the application of all assessment tools to job skill level standards/goals that issues of ethical validity are taken into consideration. In brief, ethical validity refers to how assessment tools are applied within social contexts. Is the application fair? What "good" is achieved by the application of the assessment tool? What potential harm can be done to persons affected by the application? Do persons who can perform a particular job/task achieve the standard/goal?

20. IMPORTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORTS FOR MONITORING AND ADJUSTING, IF APPROPRIATE, ENTRY SKILL LEVELS and STANDARDS/GOALS: For each program implementing SLPI use SLPI results need to be monitored in order to help determine if results support or do not support program sign language entry skill levels and standards/goals. Programs vary in their ability and resources: (a) to provide follow-up meetings for people taking the SLPI, (b) to provide SLPI interviewing-rating services within specified time frames, (c) to hire people who already possess sign language communication skills (especially at job skill level standards), and (d) to provide sign language communication skills development opportunities. An annual sign language program report, therefore, that includes SLPI results should be used to inform policy decisions for establishing, maintaining, and/or changing entry skill levels and standards/goals, and for making other policy and programmatic changes. One reason for an annual report is to check group results in order to help determine if standards/goals and timelines are appropriate. For example, if a job position standard/goal is Advanced and results show that 90 to 95% of staff in this job position achieve this standard/goal within the expected timeline this would support maintaining Advanced as the standard/goal. On the other hand if only 30% achieve the standard/goal for a given position within the expected timeline the fairness of the standard/goal and timeline may be questioned and programmatic changes should be considered in order to address this. These changes may include: (a) extending the timeline, (b) improving and expanding sign language communication skill development opportunities available to staff, (c) raising skill level expectations at time of job entry, and (d) changing the standard/goal.

Note 1: In addition to the above possible changes it may be appropriate to provide in-service training for SLPI Team Members in order to help ensure they are interpreting and applying the SLPI Rating Scale in a consistent manner. The L/OPI literature recommends that raters receive re-calibration training every two to three years. (As stated in PRINCIPLE #13, the SLPI is based on the L/OPI.)

Note 2: See PRINCIPLE #7.

Conclusion

The establishment of sign language communication job entry skill levels and standard/goals is a major step in improving communication and services in academic, vocational, and other professional environments. At the same time it is critical to recognize that establishment of job entry skill levels, standards/goals, and timelines for achieving standards/goals, requires on-going efforts to ensure fairness. This responsibility can only be satisfied through on-going monitoring of SLPI results and openness to making changes as appropriate to entry skill levels, standards/goals, timelines for achieving standards/goals, and other policy and programmatic changes in order to help ensure we are acting in a fair and ethical manner. An annual staff/employee sign language program report is an important part of this monitoring procedure. For sample annual sign language program reports see documents in the Policies, Procedures & Research part of www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

SLPI PAPER #19:
MONITORING THE CONSISTENSY OF YOUR SLPI TEAM MEMBERS' RATINGS

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Introduction

The purposes of this SLPI PAPER are to provide you with information about the importance of SLPI Coordinators monitoring the SLPI ratings of their SLPI Team Members, to encourage programs using the SLPI to conduct SLPI reliability and validity studies, and to report on SLPI reliability and validity studies.

Why Monitor SLPI Ratings?

It is important for programs using the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) to monitor the consistency of SLPI independent ratings prior to team discussion both across SLPI Team Members (inter-rater reliability) and to monitor how well Team Members' independent ratings prior to team discussion compare to official ratings (validity). The two primary reasons for this monitoring are to help ensure fairness to candidates/candidates taking the SLPI and to assist in planning and providing in-service training as appropriate for SLPI Team Members.

In regards to the first reason, fairness to SLPI candidates, it is important that candidates are given the opportunity to show their best sign language communication skills. This requires that candidates are provided information that is intended to help prepare them for taking the SLPI, that they receive SLPI interviews that are conducted in a manner that allows them the opportunity to show their best sign language communication skills, and that they receive fair and accurate SLPI ratings. Relative to the latter the use of more than one rater with each rater providing independent ratings prior to rater team discussion helps to provide an on-going check on the consistency of raters within normal SLPI rating procedures. In addition, SLPI candidates, raters, and coordinators may request re-ratings and re-interviews if they believe rating results or interviews do not accurately reflect candidates' true skills. It is the SLPI process as a whole, therefore, that helps to ensure candidates have the opportunity to show their best sign language communication skills and to have these skills rated in a consistent manner.

The second reason for monitoring consistency of raters' ratings, to assist in planning and providing SLPI Team Members with appropriate in-service training, is important to ensure SLPI Team Members are interpreting the SLPI Rating Scale in a correct and consistent manner. For example, if Rater A provides ratings that are consistently different from the ratings of other SLPI Team Members her/his SLPI Coordinators should consider conducting one-on-one in-service training with Rater A. Also, if two raters rate an interview as Advanced and another rater rates this same interview as Intermediate, their SLPI Coordinator should consider meeting one-on-one with this latter rater or bringing all three raters together to discuss the appropriate rating for the candidate. In addition to one-to-one and small group in-service training it is important to periodically bring all SLPI Team Members together for rating practice and discussion. The literature for the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), the spoken language assessment tool upon which the SLPI is based, recommends this type of "re-calibration" occur every two-to-three years for L/OPI raters.

Encouragement and Support for Monitoring the Consistency of Your SLPI Team
in Conducting SLPI Ratings

A complex research study does need to be planned and conducted in order to monitor the
consistency of SLPI ratings conducted by SLPI Teams. The following questions may be
answered by a program on-going recording of normal SLPI rating procedure results in a
database:

1.   How often are your raters' independent first ratings the same or within one rating level of
        one another?

2.   When your raters' first independent ratings are not the same or within one level of one
        another, how often do second independent ratings following second viewings of SLPI
        interviews result in ratings that are the same or within one level of one another? [a]

3.   If re-ratings are requested by persons taking the SLPI or by the SLPI Coordinator -

        A. How often are ratings of second rating teams in agreement with the ratings of first
            rating teams?

        B. When ratings of first and second rating teams not in agreement how do ratings of third
            rating teams compare to the ratings of first and second ratings teams?

If resources allow, as part of a study to monitor consistency of raters a program may wish to
have two or more rating teams rate the same SLPI interview. Prior to doing this the normal rating
procedure should be followed until an official rating has been determined.

SLPI **Final Ratings** and **Official Ratings**

Given the above discussion, when recording results for monitoring consistency of SLPI ratings
by your SLPI Team Members, it is important to be clear on the difference between SLPI **final
ratings** and SLPI **official ratings**:

1. **Final ratings** are ratings made by individual raters. Each rater always provides an exact or
single level rating; for example, Superior Plus, Superior, Advanced Plus, and so forth.

2. **Official ratings** are ratings reported to persons taking the SLPI. Official ratings may be
reported as **ranges** (for example, Novice Range) or as **exact single level** ratings (for example,
Novice and Novice Plus).

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[a]Second <u>independent ratings prior to discussion</u> are made when all three raters first independent
  are not within one level of one another.

SLPI Reliability and Validity: Three Rater Team Procedure

In a 1996 NTID research proposal F. Caccamise, W. Newell, H. Lang, and D. Metz outlined studies designed to investigate the following three questions:

1.   How consistent are ratings within SLPI Rating Teams (three raters per team)
2.   How consistent are raters in interpreting the SLPI Rating Scale? (three raters per team)
3.   How consistent are ratings across SLPI Rating Teams of three raters?

Rater Consistency <u>Within</u> SLPI Rating Teams and in Interpreting the SLPI Rating Scale

In a 1999 pilot study report designed to investigate the first two questions posed above, F. Caccamise and W. Newell provided analyses of 205 SLPIs conducted at NTID from 1993-to-1996. Relative to the first question, consistency of ratings within SLPI Rating Teams, analysis showed that for the 191 SLPIs receiving official ratings all three NTID SLPI Rating Teams members (prior to any rater discussion) were within one level of one another 136 times (72.2%) for first independent ratings and were within one level of one another 181 times (94.8%) by second independent ratings. Relative to the second question, consistency of raters in interpreting the SLPI Rating Scale, analysis showed that for the 191 SLPIs receiving official ratings: (1) of 573 first independent ratings, 546 (95.3%) were within one level of official ratings; and (2) of 168 second independent ratings, 164 (97.6%) were within one level of official ratings. These pilot study results support that ratings within NTID SLPI Rating Teams of three are consistent and that NTID SLPI Raters are able to consistently interpret the SLPI Rating Scale. In addition, when all three raters' first independent ratings are not within one level of one another second independent ratings significantly improve consistency among raters prior to discussion among raters.

During the 2001-02 and 2002-03 academic years (AY01-02 and AY02-03) NTID used the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure and then in AY03-04 NTID re-implemented the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure. With this re-implementation of the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure a study was initiated to investigate the reliability and validity of the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure as conducted at NTID. Based on an analysis of 160 SLPIs conducted at NTID from the AY03-04 Fall Quarter through the AY05-06 Fall Quarter the following was reported:

> The results of the reliability analyses show that for first independent ratings greater than 86% of raters produced ratings that were within one rating level of the other members of their rating teams. When all three rating team members' first independent ratings were not within one rating level of one another, adding a second independent rating prior to discussion boosted the reliability of ratings within one rating level to greater than 96%. These results confirm that the reliability for NTID SLPI raters' independent ratings prior to negotiated discussion, review, and determination of candidates' official ratings, was very high.

> The results of the validity analysis for this study indicate relatively strong validity for raters' pre-negotiated independent ratings. Only 2.5% of first independent ratings fell outside one level of the official ratings. Adding a second independent rating prior to rater team discussion when the first independent ratings of the three raters were not all within one level of one another reduced this percentage to 0.6%. These results suggest that the

influence of idiosyncratic construct-irrelevant variance on construct validity prior to negotiation is minor, and that the negotiation process is effective in reducing the impact of this variance on SLPI validity in the majority of rater-disagreement cases.

The SLPI evaluation protocol was designed to converge toward increasingly reliable and valid official ratings through the use of multiple stages of independent ratings and negotiated discussion and review of candidates' interviews in relation to a standardized scaled linguistic performance profile grounded in a theory of language use and learning. The NTID reliability and validity data reported in this paper provide clear evidence that the SLPI evaluation protocol successfully accomplishes that goal….

[Caccamise, F., & Samar, V. (2009). Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) pre-negotiation inter-rater reliability and rater validity. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders (CICSD)*, <u>36</u>, 36-47.]

Consistency <u>Across</u> SLPI Rating Teams of Three

In 1998 F. Caccamise and W. Newell provided a progress report for a study that was designed to investigate the third question posed by Caccamise et al. (1996); that is, reliability of SLPI results across SLPI Rating Teams of three raters. Results showed that of five SLPI interviews rated by three NTID SLPI Rating Teams all three teams had the same ratings for four interviews with two teams having the same rating and one team a rating one level lower for the fifth interview. In addition, of four interviews that were rated by two teams both teams had the same ratings for three interviews with two teams differing by one level for the fourth interview. These tentative (due to small number) results supported that SLPI results across NTID SLPI Rating Teams of three are consistent. From AY98-99 through AY00-01 the demand for NTID SLPI services resulted in no additional data being collected for this study. As stated earlier, NTID used the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure during AY01-02 and AY02-03. Given the return by NTID to the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure in AY03-04 as resources allow further study of consistency across SLPI Rating Teams of Three Raters will be conducted.

Reliability Research – SLPI Individual Rater Procedure

In addition to the traditional SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure in 1998 we began to offer training for an SLPI Individual Rater Procedure and in 2003 we began offering training for an SLPI Two Rater Team Procedure. A brief description of these procedures is provided in SLPI PAPER #9, *Options for Conducting and Sharing Results of SLPI Ratings*

Several programs use or have used the Individual Rater Procedure, and three of these programs, Florida, South Carolina, and Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB, SCSDB, and USDB), in consultation with the author of this paper have monitored consistency of SLPI Team Members' ratings during the past several years. Also, as stated earlier, use of the SLPI Individual Rater Procedures was initiated at NTID in the Fall of 2001.

Barbara Curtis, FSDB SLPI Coordinator, and Claire Bailey, SCSDB SLPI Coordinator, reported satisfaction with the consistency of ratings obtained via the SLPI Individual Rater Procedures. Both Barbara and Claire, however, stated that they had become dissatisfied with the support for ratings provided on SLPI Individual Rater Worksheets. Therefore, during AY05-06 both FSDB

and SCSDB changed to the SLPI Two Rater Team Procedure and both have indicated this has resulted in improved support for interview ratings on rater worksheets.

NTID, however, had a different experience. As reported in the *NTID Faculty/Staff Communication Research Group (F/SCRG) Final Report* (F. Caccamise, 2005) by S. Schley and F. Caccamise, during AY02-03 an analysis of SLPI research ratings for 11 candidates with official ratings of Intermediate, Intermediate Plus, and Advanced supported that ratings obtained via the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure were inconsistent across NTID SLPI raters. Considering this analysis of results for the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure, the importance of the Intermediate-to-Advanced SLPI rating range for NTID faculty/staff, and the results of the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure reliability study for 1993-through-1996 NTID SLPI ratings, it was recommended that NTID return to use of the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedures. As stated earlier during AY03-04 the SLPI Three Rater Team Procedure was re-implemented at NTID.

Jean Thomas, the USDB SLPI Coordinator, like Barbara and Claire, has reported satisfaction with the consistency of ratings obtained via the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure. In addition, Jean reported satisfaction with the support for ratings provided on SLPI Individual Rater Worksheets. In discussing this with Jean it was learned that USDB schedules raters to come to a single location at the same time to conduct their ratings. Following their independent ratings this allows raters to discuss both ratings they agree on and ratings they disagree on and to have immediate discussions to assist in resolving rating differences. Also, as appropriate the SLPI Coordinator discusses ratings and support for ratings with raters. According to Jean this procedure serves to maintain a sense of team among USDB SLPI Team Members and serves as an on-going form of SLPI Team member in-service training. The SLPI Individual Rater Procedure as implemented at USDB may well explain why USDB has experienced success with this procedure.

In addition, the SLPI Individual Rater Procedure may be expected to work most successfully when all or most ratings are reported as ranges rather than specific ratings (see SLPI PAPER #16. *Options for Reporting SLPI Ratings*).

<center>Conclusion</center>

Monitoring the consistency of SLPI Team Members' ratings is important to helping ensure the fairness of the SLPI process for persons taking the SLPI and for planning and conducting appropriate in-service training for SLPI Team Members. Hopefully the information in this PAPER is helpful to programs in ensuring the fairness of ratings conducted by their SLPI Teams and helpful to planning in-service training on an individual and group basis for SLPI Team Members.

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SLPI PAPER #20: SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) USE

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Programs that are considering hosting an SLPI Training Workshop and implementing SLPI use often ask where and with whom has SLPI use been implemented. SLPI PAPER #4, *SLPI-SCPI-SLPI History*, and SLPI PAPER #14, *Sign Language Assessment of Students and ASL Assessment Options* provide information about development and use of interview techniques, including the SLPI, for assessing sign language communication skills. In this PAPER we focus on use of the SLPI developed by us when we were colleagues at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

Our SLPI was originally developed and piloted at NTID for evaluating the sign language communication skills of NTID faculty and staff (Newell, Caccamise, Boardman, & Holcomb, 1983) with the first formal implementation of SLPI use occurring for Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) residential staff (Caccamise, Newell, & Mitchell-Caccamise, 1983).

As listed on the next page SLPI Training Workshops and implementation have occurred at more than 50 academic and vocational rehabilitation programs across the United States and in Canada, Kenya, and Ghana. Articles have been published that describe SLPI implementation and use with LSD residential staff (as stated above). Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf staff (Newell, Caccamise, Tebo, & McAdam, 1988; Newell, Caccamise, & Tebo, 1989), Michigan School for the Deaf staff (Caccamise, Updegraff, & Newell, 1990), and Georgia Division of Rehabilitation Services and New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff (Caccamise, Newell, Fennell, & Carr, 1988). In addition, SLPI use has been implemented: (1) with Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (ADMHMR) employees and potential employees, New Jersey Vocational Rehabilitation staff, and the NYC Police Department; (2) for Minnesota teacher of the deaf/hard-of-hearing state licensure procedures for; (3) for satisfaction of sign language graduation expectations for students in the NTID Masters of Science and Secondary Education Program, the Canisius College Department of Deaf Education, the Georgia State University Department of Deaf Education, and the Valdosta State University Teacher of the Deaf and Interpreting Education Programs; (4) for selection of South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind student intern applicants (Student Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Counselor Interns, Speech/Language Interns, Audiological Interns, Interpreter Interns, and ASL Instructor Interns); (5) as a screening tool with Georgia Perimeter College Sign Language Interpreting Program applicants and with Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) Educational Interpreting Performance Assessment applicants; (6) for assessing sign language skills and identifying sign language skills development needs for APSEA and Michigan School for the Deaf students (with modifications, such as use of pictures, with younger students); and (7) for assessing community based Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (ADMHMR) community based clients' sign language skills, as a marker for changes in their language competencies, and to assist them in language development.

Table 1

Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Training Workshops and Use

1.   Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD)
2.   Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD)
3.   Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD)
4.   South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB)
5.   Willie Ross School for the Deaf (WRSD)
6.   Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
7.   Alaska State School for the Deaf (ASSD)
8.   Center on Deafness, College of Education, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK)
9.   Georgia (GA) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
10. New York State Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)
11. Arkansas Office for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (ODHI), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
12. CA State Dept of Rehabilitation, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
13. New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS)
14. Lexington Center, Vocational Services, Jackson Heights, NY
15. Rochester School for the Deaf (RSD)
16. Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD)
17. Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority, Nova Scotia
18. Tripod and Burbank, CA School District
19. MN Resource Center: Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing/MN State Teacher (Re) Licensure
20. National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
21. Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD)
22. Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB)
23. Communication Service for the Deaf, SD Association of the Deaf
24. Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD)
25. Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD)
26. Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD)
27. Georgia School for the Deaf (GSD)
28. Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD)
29. North Carolina Schools for the Deaf (NCSD)
30. St. Francis Desales School for the Deaf
31. Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind (CSDB)
32. Texas School for the Deaf (TSD)
33. Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)
34. South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD)
35. Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD)
36. Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD)
37. New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD)
38. Department of Corrections, NYS Civil Service
39. Deaf Education Graduate Students, Canisius College
40. Utah School for the Deaf and Blind (USDB)
41. American School for the Deaf (ASD)
42. Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf (MNMSD)
43. Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind
44. Kenya, US Peace Corp
45. Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)
46. Valdosta State University, GA
47. Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
48. Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults
49. St. Mary's School for the Deaf, NY
50. VA School for the Deaf, Blind, and Multi-Disabled
51. NJ School for the Deaf, Katzenbach Campus
52. Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
53. Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH)/
     Phoenix College Interpreter Preparation Program (PCIPP)
54   Ghana, US Peace Corp
55. Northern Virginia Community College
56. J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (Richmond, VA)

SLPI use is generally implemented within the context of integrated sign language communication skills assessment-development programs. This requires the development of policy and procedures documents that include sign language communication skill level standards or goals for all persons who will be taking the SLPI. For example, for teachers the SLPI Advanced rating skill level has been established universally as the standard/goal and for speech-language specialists and audiologists the Intermediate Plus or Advanced rating skill level has generally been established as the standard/goal. For discussion of factors and principles for the development of sign language assessment-skills development program policy and procedures documents readers are referred to the following papers in this document: SLPI PAPER #17, *Factors Important to Development of Sign Language Communication Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*, and SLPI PAPER #18, *Principles for Development and Refinement of Sign Language Communication Philosophy, Policy, and Procedures Documents*. Model and sample sign language program policy and procedures documents are included in the Policies, Procedures & Research part of http://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.

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