

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

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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 then discuss options for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings. In-depth information (materials and procedures) for these options is provided in three different model documents for *SLPI Notebook (NB)* Section 3B and in Section 9B. These documents are available in the [Implementing and Monitoring SLPI Use](#) section and the [SLPI Training Materials](#) sections of the following website: www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi.)

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

The L/OPI, the test of spoken communication skills 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 another observer/rater 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, L/OPI interviews and ratings are conducted by foreign language professors, 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 Results of SLPI Ratings:

SLPI Three Rater Team, In-Depth Written Report, and Optional Follow-Up Meeting Procedure

Given that application of the SLPI most often has involved relating SLPI results to sign language communication skill levels expectations for educational faculty and staff and vocational rehabilitation staff, from our first training workshop in 1982 at the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) through 1998 we offered only one standard SLPI rating procedure that involved three raters meeting together and rating each interviewee's SLPI video. 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 interviewee's sign language communication skills, and suggestions for improving these skills if appropriate. SLPI Follow-Up Meetings to review SLPI videos, to discuss interviewees' 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 Results of 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 the need for an in-depth written SLPI Report of Results 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. Individuals are able to see themselves signing within their SLPI interviews by reviewing their interview videos with persons knowledgeable about the SLPI who can provide feedback on their 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 re-allocates a portion of the time which was spent by three raters meeting, discussing and writing an SLPI report of results to time spent one-on-one with individuals in follow-up meetings.

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 interviewee'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 procedure 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 interviewee 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, interviewees is scheduled for another interview.
 - OR
 - b. Video is sent back to three raters and they independently rate interviewee again. If two or three raters are in agreement, this rating is the official rating. If there is no agreement across the three raters, interviewee is scheduled for another interview.
 - OR
 - c. Interviewee 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 interviewees at follow-up meetings or sent to interviewees prior to follow-up meetings. In-depth written reports are not provided. Follow-up meetings are optional for all subsequent SLPIs. (Note: For interviewees achieving in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range, SLPI Follow-Up Meetings are always optional.)

Benefits and Potential Drawbacks to SLPI Individual Rater Procedure

Besides 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 Procedures.

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

Two additional options for conducting and sharing results of SLPI ratings combine parts of the SLPI Three Rater Team and SLPI Individual Rater Procedures; that is, these two options consist of (1) Three or Two Member Rater Team meetings to conduct ratings, and (2) follow-up meetings which are part of normal SLPI procedures first time a person takes the SLPI and optional for subsequent times the SLPI is taken. Similar to the Individual Rater Procedure, results memorandums may be given to interviewees at follow-up meetings or sent to interviewees prior to follow-up meetings, in-depth written reports are not provided, and for interviewees achieving in the Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Range follow-up meetings are always optional.

Summary Table of Procedures for Conducting SLPI Ratings and Sharing SLPI Results

To assist you in understanding options for conducting SLPI ratings and sharing SLPI results, the four procedures discussed in this paper are summarized in Table 1.

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

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	Yes First Time SLPI Is Taken, Then Optional ^{a,b}
Alternatives #2 and #3	2 or 3 Raters Together	Yes	No	Yes First Time SLPI Is Taken, Then Optional ^{a,b}

^aOptional first time for persons achieving SLPI Advanced Plus-Superior Plus Skill Level Range.

^bMay make SLPI Follow-Up Meeting optional for all interviewees the first time the SLPI is taken.

With all the SLPI procedures 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 results of SLPI ratings provide excellent alternatives to the traditional SLPI Three Rater Team and Written Report Procedure. Feedback from both SLPI Team Members and SLPI interviewees support that SLPI Follow-Up Meetings are significantly more beneficial than in-depth written reports for both understanding one’s skills and making skill development plans.