

The Implementation of Required Lab as Part of ASL Interpreting Curriculum

Presented at ASLTA Conference

July 2, 2011



Brief Introduction

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 - Taught ASL courses for several programs since 1992. More recently worked full time with Interpreting students.
 - ASLTA Professional Certification

Dilemmas

What do ASL-English Interpreter instructors see as the dilemmas?

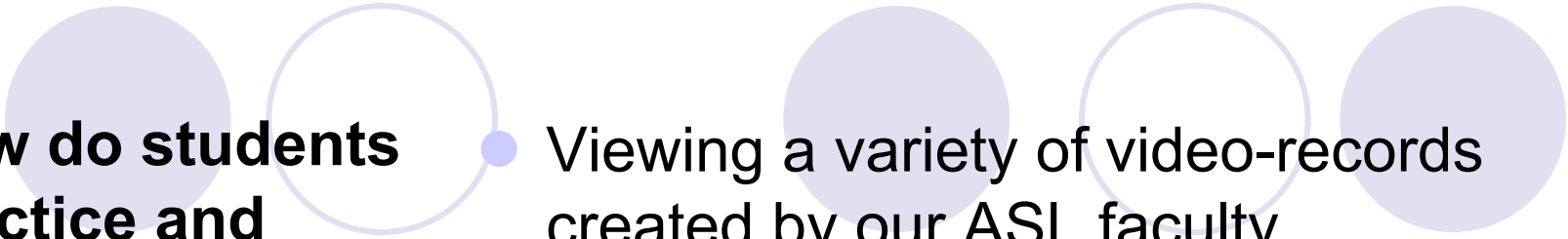
- Dilemma – quality of ASL skills interpreting students should acquire before they enter interpreting courses
- Dilemma – providing an environment to practice ASL as a natural language in the NTID community
- Dilemma – refining various components of ASL skills with each level of ASL course
- Dilemma – after completing all Interpreter ASL courses ideally what ASL skills should interpreting students have achieved

ASL Lab

ASL Labs
implemented based
on instructors'
discussion

Implementation of ASL Lab

- Required lab assignments
 - A major change to interpreting ASL curriculum
- **ASL Lab purpose is threefold**
 - provide labs as teaching and learning tools to practice and enhance ASL skills
 - educate students in ASL used by the Deaf community
 - practice what they learned at ASL Labs during ASL course work



How do students practice and improve ASL skills:

- Viewing a variety of video-records created by our ASL faculty
- **The purpose of viewing ASL videos:**
 - learn ASL examples from our ASL faculty
 - Improve receptive skills
 - improve ASL comprehension
 - increase ASL grammatical skills



Four processes of learning ASL in Lab:

- **FIRST TRY**
 - Students read instructions and determine how to sign in ASL
 - Make video-record to practice and demonstrate at their best effort
- **Second process**
 - Student views the instructor's video
 - Instructor's video acts as an ASL model
- **Third process "SECOND TRY"**
 - After viewing instructor's video, students sign in ASL again
 - Students required to emulate ASL model
- **Fourth process**
 - Students compare their FIRST and SECOND TRY videos
 - Students answer (Self or Peer) assessment report

Example of Assessment Report

Assessment Report used by students as guideline to compare FIRST and SECOND videos

Students answer questions in regards to:

- **ASL SIGN PRODUCTION**
 - Appropriate ASL signs to semantically represent the concept ?
- **ASL GRAMMATICAL FEATURES**
 - Appropriate facial expression, use of space and pauses?
 - Any important ASL grammar features omitted?
 - ASL word order followed?
- **NON-MANUAL SIGNALS**
 - Appropriate use of eye gaze, body shift, mouth movement, head positions, ...
 - Student explains their challenge to improve or develop skills
- **OVERALL SIGNING FLUENCY**
 - Expressive signing pace?
 - Appropriate use of pauses?
 - Signing too rushed or too slow?
- **STRENGTH and WEAKNESS**
 - Students identify their strength and weaknesses and what they learned from lab assignments

Basic Framework of ASL Coursework

New plan for ASL Lab activities in regards to BICS and CALP

- **ASL I, II and III**

- **BICS and CALP**

- Classroom teachers provide BICS and CALP activities every other week
 - ASL Lab students participate for language acquisition

- **What is BICS and CALP?**

- A description of BICS and CALP as theorized by Jim Cummins:

- **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)**

- Face to face conversational fluency, including mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.
 - English language learners typically acquire conversational language used in everyday activities before they develop more complex, conceptual language proficiency.

- **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**

- Language proficiency associated with schooling, and the abstract language abilities required for academic work. A more complex, conceptual, linguistic ability that includes analysis, synthesis and evaluation.



Continue Basic Framework of ASL Coursework

- With Lab assignments Interpreting students perform certain tasks to acquire, develop, practice and refine components of ASL skills
- Lab assignments designed to enhance and supplement student learning in ASL classes
 - **ASL combination theory:**
 - Classroom instruction
 - Practice application of ASL Lab assignments
 - Provide CALP and BICS activities during lab hours
- Digital video recording equipment for student Lab practice
- Requirement to commit to practicing in the lab each week

Structure of Required ASL Lab Work

- **ASL I**

- **Visual Discrimination Skills**

- Students practice visual discrimination skills
- Develop the ability to determine differences between signs or shapes of objects

- **Fingerspell and Numbers within Sentence Context**

- Classroom teachers sign in sentence context with fingerspelling and numbers. Students practice receptive skills writing what they see.

- **A Picture Description**

- Look at the description of a picture
- Determine how to explain the picture in ASL

- **Expressive Prompts Practice (EPPS)**

- Watch an EPPS DVD from ASL at Work
- Demonstrate at best ability expressing in signed sentences

- **Self Assessment**

- Answer questions in a written paper regarding EPPS video practice comparing all aspects to ASL Model's signed sentences

Continue Structure of Required ASL Lab Work

- **ASL II and III**
 - **Fingerspell and Numbers within Sentence Context**
 - Classroom teachers sign in sentence context using fingerspelling and numbers. Students practice receptive skills writing what they see.
 - **A Picture Description**
 - Look at the description of a picture
 - Determine how to explain the picture in ASL
 - **A One-Minute Narrative in ASL**
 - Watch YouTube video
 - Students have ONE-MINUTE to tell narrative in ASL discourse
 - **Expressive Prompts Practice (EPPS)**
 - Watch an EPPS DVD from ASL at Work.
 - Demonstrate at best ability expressing in signed sentences
 - **Self Assessment**
 - Answer questions in a written paper regarding EPPS video practice comparing all aspects to ASL Model's signed sentences

Continue Structure of Required ASL Lab Work

- **ASL IV**

- **Semantic Application Sentences**

- Read the semantic application sentences
- Analyze the contents and meaning of sentences

- **A Picture Description**

- Look at the description of a picture
- Determine how to explain the picture in ASL

- **A One-Minute Narrative in ASL**

- Watch YouTube video
- Students have ONE-MINUTE to tell narrative in ASL discourse

- **Self Assessment**

- Answer questions in a signed video comparing all aspects of narrative with the ASL Model's signed narrative

Continue Structure of Required ASL Lab Work

- **ASL V**

- **Semantic Application**

- Continue practice with the semantic application sentences

- **Idiomatic Expressions in ASL**

- Read and analyze English Idiomatic Expressions and the meaning in each sentence

- **A Picture Description**

- Continue practice with describing a picture

- **A Two-Minute Narrative in ASL**

- Watch YouTube video
- Students have TWO-MINUTES to tell a narrative in ASL discourse

- **Self and Peer Assessment**

- Answer questions in a signed video comparing all aspects of narrative with the ASL Model's signed narrative

Continue Basic Framework of ASL Coursework

- **ASL VI**

- **Semantic Application**

- Continue practice with semantic application sentences

- **A paragraph of ASL Grammatical Application**

- Read paragraph consisting of a specific grammatical feature.
- Analyze how to dismantle and restructure the information in ASL

- **A Three-Minute Narrative in ASL**

- Watch YouTube video
- Students have THREE-MINUTES to tell a narrative in ASL discourse

- **Peer Assessment**

- Answer questions in a signed video comparing all aspects of narrative with the ASL Model's signed narrative

ASL Lab Benefits

For the past two years, ASL and ASL-English Interpretation instructors noticed a significant improvement in students' ASL skills

- Required ASL Lab has positive benefits
- Lab practice results in improvement with receptive and expressive skills
 - Appropriate for a range of signing skill levels Intermediate to Advanced
- Instructor selects feedback method
 - One-to-one with students
 - Guidance feedback in class with discussion
 - Online written notes to provide individual feedback
- Adaptability and Flexibility
 - Enhancing quality of ASL learning

ASL Curriculum Resource

- **ASL I – III**

- ASL at Work
- Master ASL
- Signing Naturally Level I
- Videos of ASL Models

- **ASL IV – VI**

- Signing Naturally Level II, and III
- Videos of ASL Models
- Building ASL Interpreting and Translation Skills: Narratives for Practice by Nanci Scheetz
- Facilitating Manual Communication for Interpreter Students and Teachers by Dicker, L. (1982) Published by RID: Washington D.C.
- ASL/English Idioms and their Translations by Posner, A. and Brumber, R. (1997) DeafWide Services, Inc: Woodbury, NY.

- **BICS and CALP**

- More information about James Cummins in terms of BICS and CALP can be found on Website.
- **Biographical Note:** James Cummins teaches in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His research has focused on education of bilingual students.