

NETAC networks

Providing technical assistance to professionals working with students who are deaf and hard of hearing in postsecondary settings

February 2003

Stethoscopes and hearing loss? Very doable!

All students in health science programs encounter challenges that are unique to these programs. Key challenges often include: performance in clinical settings, patient safety, undifferentiated graduates, and highly competitive environments.

For students who experience hearing loss and other disabilities, these unique challenges often reflect faculty concerns about including them in the health science program. Faculty have received little-to-no information about working with these students in clinical settings.

Until now.

This spring, NETAC is proud to sponsor a great training opportunity for health sciences faculty and disability support coordinators.

Martha Smith, Project Coordinator for the Health Sciences Faculty Education Project at Oregon Health & Science University's Center on Self-Determination, will be in the NETAC region from March 25-April 4, 2003. During that time, she will travel throughout the Northeast to provide direct trainings to faculty, administrators, and clinical staff and train-the-trainer models—working closely with staff members to facilitate the training themselves.

A Day in the Life of Health Science Students is an in-service training designed specifically to meet the unique issues health

science faculty encounter in teaching students. Using a prototype of a student with a disability, the training follows that student through his or her day in the clinical portion of the health science program—whether medicine, nursing, dentistry, dental hygiene, dental assisting, clinical

laboratory science, radiology, or other allied health programs.

Using activities, faculty participation, discussion, and brainstorming, the group develops what might be appropriate accommodations and strategies for the student. Discussion centers on issues of patient safety and what is a “reasonable” accommodation. Additionally, videos of professionals with disabilities in various health science professions are shown.

Although NETAC is sponsoring this spring tour, issues of students with a variety of disabilities, including but not exclusive to hearing loss, are covered in this training.



Martha Smith

Martha has conducted *A Day in the Life...* trainings at institutions across the country, from Seattle Pacific University to the University of Tennessee to Dartmouth School of Medicine. She also works with allied health programs in community colleges. Her wide range of presentations include those at AHEAD and PEPNet conferences, state nursing boards, Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss (AMPHL), and American Medical Student Association conventions.

Rave reviews follow wherever she goes: “Fabulous examples and videos. Very helpful to me as a new faculty member,” attendee, Buffalo State University, April 2002; “Very specific information, and pertinent examples,” instructor, Portland Community College Nursing, September 2000; “I enjoyed the format and speaker. I think it will be very helpful for faculty who are not familiar with disabilities,” clinical psychologist, Dartmouth Medical School, November 2002.

Key Themes

- Health science students and professionals with disabilities bring knowledge, skills, and experiences that can enhance their work with patients and colleagues.
- Focus on Universal Design strategies that enhance learning for a widely diverse group of students, rather than on special accommodations.
- Problem solving is an important way to identify strategies and accommodations that a person needs to function in different environments.
- Focus on specific functional limitations within the context of environments, skills, and duties, rather than on a disability label.
- The intent of the ADA is to create a “level playing field” through equal access and accommodations.

Martha Smith is the Project Coordinator for the Health Sciences Faculty Education Project at Oregon Health & Science University's Center on Self-Determination. “A Day in the Life of a Health Science Student” was developed based on extensive research and consultation with health care professionals with disabilities, faculty, administrators, and disability services staff at a variety of institutions. Prior to her work on the Health Sciences project she served as the director of a disability services office at a four-year postsecondary institution for 10 years and has extensive knowledge and experience in working with people with a variety of disabilities. Martha is also fluent in American Sign Language.

For more information visit www.healthsciencefaculty.org. It may still be possible to add your institution to Martha's Spring Tour! Contact your NETAC site coordinator or Pat Billies, NETAC Project Coordinator.

The Director's Column

by Dianne Brooks

With the advent of the New Year, and NETAC close to completing its seventh year of service, perhaps this is a good time to pause and take stock of where we have been and where we are headed. Presently, our society as a whole is clearly in the fast lane with respect to technological advancements, social change, and a period of economic and fiscal austerity.

These are also challenging times for those of us involved in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing youths and adults. One of the more recent developments in the field includes, but certainly is not limited to, changes (raising the bar) in state-based graduation requirements, which have been implemented in some states or are in the process of being implemented in others. Concern has been raised that this development may seriously impact the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing postsecondary education and training opportunities, as well as the nature and kind of educational access services they may require. Also in the past few years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students with cochlear implants, as well as an increase in the number of students who rely on various technologically-based support systems such as CART and C-Print®.

Perhaps one of the most compelling indicators of change can be found in the 1994 study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which estimated that there were approximately 20,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing persons enrolled in two- and four-year colleges and universities across the country. It is further estimated that today the number stands at approximately 28,000 (Walter, G.G. – Postsecondary Education Programs Needs Assessment, 2002). Given the recent developments mentioned above, it remains to be seen just what the resulting impact will be for the next generation of deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing postsecondary education opportunities.

Those of us responsible for providing for the varied access and accommodation needs of these students, whether through direct service delivery or through the provision of outreach, training, and technical assistance, must also face the challenge of doing so with limited resources, while assuring that quality is not only maintained but also enhanced.

NETAC and its regional affiliates have been at the forefront of addressing these developments. Over the past seven years, NETAC has developed and continues to develop training materials and outreach activities for use with key audiences and to identify and share information about proven models, best practices, and innovative technology. Our NETAC site coordinators have built and maintain strong consortia representing a collaborative model that includes professionals, parents, rehabilitation personnel, and



other key audiences that provide valuable insights to NETAC regarding local, regional, and state issues and needs relevant to serving deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Suffice it to say that NETAC has established a solid tradition of being current and proactive with respect to its outreach and technical assistance activities. And in this issue of our newsletter, NETAC continues this tradition of providing timely information and details of new, state-of-the-art innovations to our colleagues throughout the region.

I want to thank all our colleagues whose invaluable contributions over the years have helped to build NETAC into the excellent, viable resource it has become.

Central Office update: Introducing Patrick Smith

In November, Patrick Smith joined the staff of the central office as server/desktop administrator. In brief, Patrick is our computer wizard! He was born at Loring Air Force Base, Maine, but grew up in Northern New York at Plattsburgh Air Force Base. He holds a math/science degree from Clinton Community College and a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology with a concentration in networking and systems administration from RIT. Patrick has a great many hobbies and interests that include hiking, camping in the Adirondacks, and biking, to name a few. He is also an avid dancer. I am pleased to have Patrick on board the NETAC team.



Dianne

NETAC *Networksis* produced at least three times a year.
Articles should be submitted electronically to
Sherlea Dony, editor, saddhd@rit.edu.
All articles are subject to editing.
Comments and suggestions are always welcome!

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Upcoming events by state*

Maryland

- “A Day in the Life of a Health Science Student,” Martha R. Smith, M.A., Project Coordinator for the Health Sciences Faculty Education Project at Oregon Health and Science University’s Center on Self Determination, an in-service training curriculum designed specifically to meet the unique issues health science faculty encounter in teaching students with disabilities in a clinical setting. Date and location TBA
- C-Print® Training, McDaniel College, May 2003.

Massachusetts

For additional information on Massachusetts events, contact Jane Nunes, Massachusetts NETAC site coordinator, 978-556-3341 (V/TTY); NETAC@necc.mass.edu.

- Service Providers Group meeting, March 2003, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., a network opportunity for postsecondary institutions serving deaf and hard-of-hearing students held in central Massachusetts; will include a demonstration of C-Print captioning by University of Massachusetts staff captionist. Pre-registration required.
- ADA training presented by Jeanne Kincaid, March 25, 2003, Northern Essex Community College. Pre-registration required. Details TBA.
- “A Day in the Life of a Medical/Dental Student,” Martha R. Smith, M.A., Project Coordinator for the Health Sciences Faculty Education Project at Oregon Health and Science University’s Center on Self Determination, April 2003, Harvard University. Pre-registration required. Details TBA.
- “It’s YOUR Future: a Career Exploration Program for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” co-sponsored with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission at the College of the Holy Cross, May 2003. Pre-registration required. Details TBA.
- A one-week intensive C-print captionist training, central Massachusetts, June 2003. Pre-testing, prep work, and registration required. Details TBA.

New Jersey

- “Administrative Issues Associated with Sign Language Interpreters (hiring, scheduling, billing, student and interpreter policies),” a workshop sponsored by New Jersey NETAC in conjunction with NJ AHEAD, April 4, 10 a.m., Middlesex County College. For more information contact Josie Durkow, NETAC site coordinator, jdurkow@camdencc.edu.

New York

- Hearing Educational Services office of the NYC Department of Education presents its annual College Transition Fair, LaGuardia Community College, April 2, time TBA. Many colleges and speakers will present to an audience of more than 150 students who are deaf or hard of hearing and their parents. Desiree Duda will present “Financing Your Education.” For more information contact Desiree Duda, NY Downstate NETAC coordinator, 203-854-5371 (V/TTY), NYCnetac@aol.com.
- Voyage to the Future, a career awareness program, April 25, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES Henry Center, 6820 Thompson Rd., Syracuse. For more information, contact Sherlea Dony, NY Upstate NETAC coordinator, 585-475-7567 (V/TTY), saddhd@rit.edu.
- Site visits are planned throughout the year. If you would like a coordinator to visit your campus, please contact the NETAC coordinator in your area.

Rhode Island

- Providence Area Schools Special Education group, March 20, presentation on NETAC resources and PEPNet by Shelly Olausen,

NETAC RI site coordinator. For more information contact Shelly Olausen, 401-333-7117 (voice); 401-333-7346 (TTY); or Solausen@ccri.cc.ri.us.

* Updated information will be posted on the NETAC Web site as it becomes available.

Rhode Island update

by Shelly Olausen

The state of Rhode Island, capitalizing on its size, has formed five regional Collaboratives designed to support students with disabilities in transition from secondary education to adult life. Each Collaborative is composed of teachers, counselors, community business representatives, and support service personnel.

The NETAC RI Site Coordinator has been visiting the five area Transition Centers that house the Collaboratives to present PEPNet/NETAC resources and expand awareness of services to regional high school teachers and community representatives. These Transition Centers have been successful in uniting the efforts of various stakeholders in supporting students with school-to-work and transition issues.

NETAC RI has highlighted some of the exciting new materials available through PEPNet/NETAC:

- The first of a series of videotapes on career exploration, “Phenomenal Professionals” available for loan through the NETAC RI office.
- The “Achieving Goals” Web site, <http://netac.rit.edu/goals/>
- “Financing Your Education,” financial support information, http://netac.rit.edu/publication/financing_your_education/
- “Gates to Adventure,” an interactive program designed to assist students with transition planning, <http://www.pepnet.org/train.asp#gates>
- The PEPNet Resource Center, <http://prc.csun.edu/>

NETAC RI has been well received by each Collaborative and is eager to support the efforts of these regional Transition Centers.

For further information regarding PEPNet or NETAC resources or for technical assistance, contact Shelly Olausen, RI Site Coordinator, 401-333-7117 (voice); 401-333-7346 (TTY); or Solausen@ccri.cc.ri.us.

Free templates for service provider handbooks

In response to the need for samples of policy handbooks from various postsecondary institutions serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing, in an earlier issue of *NETAC Networks* we let you know that the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) developed handbook templates that can be modified to meet your needs. Templates are available for Captionists, Faculty, Interpreters, Notetakers, Parents, and Students.

To download your free templates, go to <http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/products.html>, scroll down to “Handbook Templates,” and click on the link to download the template directly to your computer. This is the quickest way to get your free copy!

Strong Connections: A videoconference-based sign language interpreter service for healthcare settings

by Robert Pollard, Ph.D., Director



As she was preparing to deliver her first child, Jeanne, a deaf woman in the Southern Tier of New York State, was told by her local hospital that a sign language interpreter would not be provided, despite mandates in the NYS hospital code and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requiring interpreter services for deaf patients and their families. Instead, Jeanne's husband, Eric, who is only partially hearing, was pressed into service as the "interpreter" for his wife's delivery.

Unable to fulfill the birthing coach role he'd planned on, Eric instead struggled to understand the words being said by the labor and delivery team—his lipreading efforts hampered by the noisy environment as well as concern for his wife's comfort and safety and the health of his soon-to-be-born child. When complications set in, the conversation among the healthcare workers became more frenetic, aggravating Eric's attempts to understand them and convey the information to his wife.

Medical necessity soon dictated that a Caesarian section be performed but, by then, stress, unfamiliar words, and the worsening lipreading environment had precluded Eric's ability to understand and keep up. Jeanne was soon whisked away, both she and her husband having been denied access to communication and information that was their legal right. In addition, both were subject to stressors that robbed them of the mutually supportive husband-wife roles they should have been able to play. Fortunately, the C-section was successful and the family returned home after discharge, grateful yet dismayed at this all-too-typical healthcare communication nightmare.

This story is true and took place a few months before *Strong Connections* debuted in Jeanne and Eric's community, henceforth changing the nature of the healthcare experience for deaf people in the Southern Tier.

Strong Connections uses leading-edge videoconference technology to bring medically-experienced sign language interpreters "into the room" at remote healthcare settings where deaf patients or family members have presented. Our goal is to enhance healthcare access for deaf people and their families by providing expert interpreter services to healthcare institutions that have limited or no access to local interpreters.

Over six years in development, *Strong Connections* has been serving patients in the Olean and Buffalo, New York, regions since August, 2000. To date, approximately 50 patient services have been rendered and *Strong Connections* has grown to the point that we have begun inviting hospitals and other healthcare facilities around the country to subscribe to our service.

The service works in this manner: two-way audio and visual communications are established between our University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) hub and the remote service location, using two videoconference units connected by three "bundled" ISDN lines. The three lines yield a 384 kbs data transfer rate—the minimum necessary for clear, bi-directional sign language communication, according to our tests. The *Strong Connections* interpreter observes the deaf patient's sign language through the remote camera and translates into spoken English for the healthcare provider to hear through the monitor's speakers. The provider simply speaks to the patient, who watches the signed translation by viewing the monitor. The *Strong Connections* interpreter is able to hear the provider via a microphone attached to the unit at the remote setting.

Strong Connections allows hospitals and medical offices to reach our certified, medically experienced interpreters 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Patients, providers, and our interpreter staff have uniformly offered high praise for the service.

URMC is the ideal facility to launch such a service. Rochester, New York has the largest per capita deaf population in the world. URMC employs 21 medically experienced, nationally certified sign language interpreters whose familiarity with deaf patient care and typical provider-patient dialogue is unsurpassed. The healthcare translation experience of our interpreter team is a key element of *Strong Connections*' success and our potential appeal to service subscribers. URMC is also home to the Deaf Wellness Center (DWC), a program that has launched numerous service, training, and scholarship initiatives in healthcare, mental health, and interpreting. *Strong Connections* was conceived and launched by a team of specialists in the deaf healthcare field, including DWC director Dr. Robert Pollard, URMC coordinator of interpreting services, Kathy Miraglia, and Dr. Steve Barnett, URMC Department of Family Medicine.

Strong Connections has attracted more than \$500,000 in funding from a variety of groups interested in healthcare and the deaf population. After the preliminary development phase was completed, our patient care services phase was launched in March, 2000 with a grant of \$126,000 from URMC. The success of this phase convinced the NEC Foundation of America, which supports programs with national impact that apply technology to assist people with disabilities, to contribute \$50,000 in October, 2001 toward the program's expansion. To the same end, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, Inc., recently provided a \$200,000 grant. The Rochester Institute of Technology Executive MBA program selected *Strong Connections* for its Capstone Program, which provides expert consultation to businesses valued at \$60,000.

Let us return to the story of Jeanne and Eric. Since the summer of 2000, *Strong Connections* has been providing interpreter services for the couple's well-baby visits at University Primary Care in Olean, NY (over 100 miles from our URMC base) and, occasionally, their visits to the Olean General Hospital (OGH) Emergency Department, where *Strong Connections* also has a service agreement. When Jeanne became pregnant with her second child earlier this year, *Strong Connections* and OGH agreed to extend the ISDN lines up to the Labor and Delivery area of the hospital. On March 30, 2002, Jeanne gave birth to her second child at OGH—this time with the assistance of *Strong Connections*. Her husband, Eric, was free to play the role he was meant to—husband and father—while our interpreters played the role at which they are experts. Legal responsibilities were addressed and liability and patient care risks were reduced. *Strong Connections* hopes to play a similar role for healthcare facilities around NYS and beyond in the near future.

View the *Strong Connections* Web site at www.urmc.rochester.edu/StrongConnections or contact us at 585-275-9200 or StrongConnections@urmc.rochester.edu.

Dr. Robert Pollard is Associate Professor of Psychiatry (Psychology) and Director of the Deaf Wellness Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Access Issues and Answers

UC settlement re: services to deaf/hard-of-hearing students*

by Jane Jarrow

November, 2002 saw the announcement of a settlement in a class-action suit brought by deaf/hard-of-hearing students against the University of California at Berkeley and the University of California at Davis. This is a single settlement that is not legally binding on any other institutions. That having been said, I think that there are lessons to be learned from this settlement.

The facts:

The suit was originally brought by a single student (Siddiqi) and was eventually joined by four other students representing a class of students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing who have been enrolled at the UC-Berkeley and -Davis campuses over the last several years. It seems likely that one campus was engaging in practice a, b, c and that the other was engaging in practice d, e, f. However, by combining the suit against the two institutions, it becomes impossible (in reading the settlement) to sort out who was doing what. All that remains is an agreement on the part of BOTH institutions to proceed differently in the future.

The institutions involved did nothing blatantly discriminatory in their treatment of deaf/hard-of-hearing students. They didn't flatly refuse service or consciously exclude anyone from participation. Rather, the practices they were cited for, and which presumably led them to this settlement, were practices that were arranged for the convenience of the institution in organizing and overseeing services to this population. Sometimes institutional convenience came at the expense of full access for students who were deaf/hard-of-hearing.

It appears that there were three pieces of institutional practice that resulted in limiting the access of students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing:

- The institutions had a "three-strikes" policy regarding interpreting services (remember, "they" means the plaintiffs collectively—this practice might have been in place for one campus or the other or both); if a deaf student failed to appear and failed to give adequate notice three times, interpreter services were withdrawn.
- The institutions sometimes ignored the request from students for the preference of accommodation they chose; students who requested real-time captioning were sometimes provided interpreters instead (presumably because interpreters were either easier or cheaper to arrange).
- The institutions had a system in place that required deaf/hard-of-hearing students to request interpreters for extra-curricular activities directly from the unit on campus sponsoring the event. Since it was not uncommon for organizers in the far-flung campus community to be ineffective in the provision of quality interpreting in these situations, the result was that deaf/hard-of-hearing students were often excluded from participation.

The service provider is not in a better position to judge what will provide effective access for the student than is that student himself/herself.

Those are the issues that are likely to have led them to settlement, and *those* are practices that, I believe, needed to be changed. However, the settlement agreement is not limited to changes in these three areas. As part of the settlement, the parties agreed to a number of other provisions detailing both the type and scope of services they will provide to deaf/hard-of-hearing students in the future, some of which involved significant expense. It should be remembered that these changes were not an edict from the court, but part of an agreed-upon settlement. Moreover, a settlement is only binding upon the parties involved (in this case, *only* UC-Berkeley and Davis).

What DSS providers/administrators can learn from this settlement:

- **You cannot withdraw services** (for failure to perform/cooperate) **if services are necessary in order to assure equal access.** It is still somewhat unclear if the institutions had actively withdrawn services or simply threatened to do so.

While the facts here are unclear, the message is plain. The provision of (in this case) interpreter services is *not* a privilege, but a right, if such is needed for full access. You cannot withdraw/terminate/cancel such services because the student has "abused the privilege" or even if the student has failed to follow their obligations in providing appropriate notice of the need to cancel the

interpreter. Note that the agreement speaks only to a prohibition on terminating services, not to the possibility of suspending services until such time as the rules are reviewed (which is often considered standard practice). There is nothing in this agreement that suggests that such a policy would be a problem.

- **In assigning appropriate accommodations, the preference of the user must be given primary consideration.** Words to this effect come straight out of Title II of the ADA and should be considered good practice in any setting. This does not mean that students always get whatever they ask for, but it *does* mean that if you are preparing to offer an alternative to their method of choice, you had best be prepared to justify that decision. The service provider is not in a better position to judge what will provide effective access for the student than is that student himself/herself.
- **You cannot abdicate responsibility for providing adequate auxiliary aids and services in all necessary contexts by assigning the task of making arrangements to people who can't or won't get the job done.** The institutions probably intended to share both the responsibility and the cost of accessibility throughout the institutional community. A noble ideal—but it doesn't work in practice. When you leave the job of identifying, arranging, and paying for interpreters to people who have never had to do it before, you run a better-than-average chance of access denied.

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Promoting access to teaching and learning for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in postsecondary education

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has awarded slightly over \$1 million to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, to promote access and inclusion for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in postsecondary education.

The three-year project is funded through two DOE programs, the Demonstration Program to Ensure a Quality Higher Education to Students with Disabilities, and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. In combination, these two grants will work to increase access for deaf and hard-of-hearing college students nationally by modifying teaching practices of their instructors.

“Progress has been made in providing support services such as interpreters and notetakers for these students,” said Susan Foster, professor at NTID and principal investigator for the grants. “However, college instructors are often unaware of the subtle yet critical ways in which their teaching styles support or hinder the academic success of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. For example, sign language interpreters will finish signing what the instructor has said about 7-10 seconds after he has finished speaking. If the instructor asks a question of the class and calls on a student without taking into account this lag time, deaf students will not have the opportunity to respond.

“Hard-of-hearing students who depend on speechreading to understand their instructor will miss information when she speaks while writing on the board or stands near a window where glare from sunlight obscures her features. When a deaf student is working with hearing peers on a group assignment, he often will experience difficulty keeping up with the rapid-fire and overlapping nature of group discussions.

“NTID and RIT have a wealth of experience in identifying and working to resolve these and many other barriers to access for deaf and hard-of-hearing students enrolled in mainstream postsecondary classes.”

“These examples may seem obvious,” said Gary Long, associate professor at NTID and co-principal investigator. “But often faculty have never had the opportunity to see things from the perspective of the deaf or hard-of-hearing student, and changing longstanding teaching behaviors is often quite difficult. This project will give college teachers an opportunity to look at the college classroom through the eyes of these students, and then offer specific, simple, and practical strategies they can use to

adjust their teaching styles without sacrificing the quality of instruction or demanding huge amounts of their time or energy.”

Rosemary Saur, associate professor at NTID and project coordinator, adds, “We also realize that many faculty may question the value of investing time and energy in changing their pedagogy for a relatively small number of students, especially when they only have a deaf or hard-of-hearing student in their courses occasionally. However, we have found that when faculty do modify their teaching to facilitate access to instruction for these students—for example, by pausing before calling on a student, maintaining eye contact with the class, and providing communication expectations and guidelines for students assigned to work groups—the result is usually increased access for all students, deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing alike. In particular, other non-traditional students may experience increased access to instruction and learning, including those with learning disabilities, and students for whom English is a second language. By highlighting this additional benefit, we hope to provide faculty with a stronger rationale for modifying their teaching practices.”

Three core activities are planned. First, Summer Institutes are currently being developed that will provide attendees with a range of experiential workshops, small group discussions, and individualized tutorials focused on access to instruction and learning for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The first of these Summer Institutes is scheduled for June 2003 and will be limited to institutions in the northeastern U.S.; nominations for partner institutions for the 2003 Summer Institutes are currently being solicited through the NETAC site coordinators. Summer Institutes in 2004 will include participants from a national sample of postsecondary institutions. Second, follow-up visits by project personnel starting in September 2003 will provide support to Summer Institute participants as they implement the ideas from workshops in their classes and on their campuses. Third, portable versions of workshop materials such as CDs, videotapes, and a website that can be used independently by faculty and administrators at their home institutions will be developed, tested and distributed nationally; prototypes of these materials should be available by winter 2003, and finished products by the winter of 2004/05.

For further information or to be placed on the project mailing list, please contact Judy Ferguson (Staff Assistant to the Project) through e-mail at jafasp@rit.edu.

UC settlement re: services to deaf/hard of hearing students*

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The most important lesson?

It is unclear why the institutions let this drag out as long as they did and let it end the way it did. If they had fixed their faulty practices up front and agreed to work with the plaintiffs from the beginning, they might not have had to make the concessions they did on other issues. Perhaps they *tried* to settle early on and the plaintiffs were not cooperative. Either way, I have to wonder whether the final settlement agreement was reviewed by folks knowledgeable about 504/ADA before it was signed, or only by the lawyer-types who were patting themselves on the back for a

successful negotiation. WARNING: Don't exclude people who understand the ramifications of the decision from deliberations *about* the decision.

Jane Jarrow, Ph.D., is president of Disability Access Information and Support (DAIS). An expert in disability services, she has been providing technical assistance and training to service providers on access and support services for persons with disabilities in higher education and has co-authored or authored numerous books and articles in the field of disabilities in higher education over the past 20 years.

**Further discussion of this topic to follow in the spring edition of this newsletter!*

Teacher Tipsheets get a new name and some new topics

NETAC Tipsheets is the new name for what we formerly called *Teacher Tipsheets*. The new name more accurately reflects the variety of audiences who use these handy one-page descriptors that are one of NETAC's most popular publications. Four new topics will soon be available in print and on the NETAC Web site:

- Distance Learning
- Grantwriting
- IDEA Tools
- Community Based Rehabilitation Programs

These *NETAC Tipsheets* should be ready by the end of this month, and several more are in the works to be ready by spring. Stay tuned!

Technology Symposium stipends available

NETAC will be providing two stipends per state for professionals (secondary and postsecondary) to attend the June 23-27, 2003 Technology Symposium, "Instructional Technology and Education of the Deaf."

This conference will take place at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY and is sponsored by NTID, The Nippon Foundation, PEN-International, and NETAC.

Contact the NETAC site coordinator in your state for more information.

NTID reinvents the ASL dictionary

by Geoff Poor

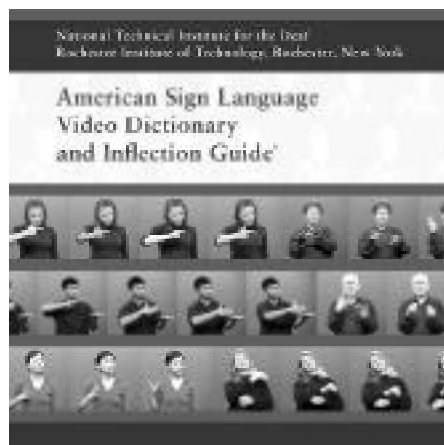
A revolutionary American Sign Language dictionary, developed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, is now available on CD for both PC and Mac users.

The ASL Video Dictionary and Inflection Guide is the first and only product that links thousands of signs to sentences illustrating how the signs change, a critical feature because of the ways that ASL signs change—inflect—from sentence to sentence to show different meanings. For example, changes in the movement of the sign for "help" can cause the sign to mean help him, help them, help me, help him for a long time, etc.

Learning isolated signs from regular dictionaries is just the beginning of learning how the signs work in real use. This dictionary shows signs in their natural inflections, in sentences, to help users gain a true understanding of American Sign Language, not just a list of its vocabulary.

The CD has 2,700 signs and English equivalents; 2,000 of the signs are linked to at least one of 650 sentences that demonstrate the inflections and other ASL grammar. One thousand of the signs are also grouped by meaning into 26 categories. Each sign is shown with a list of "Similar Signs"—signs that may look confusingly similar—that users can click on. Users can choose to see both the ASL sentences and their written English translations simultaneously, or one first and then the other. They can also choose from normal and slow speeds for all video. An on-line text section describes ASL inflection and sentence structure, with links to video examples.

"The American Sign Language Video Dictionary and Inflection Guide is a much needed resource for ASL students," said Nancy J. Bloch, executive director of the National Association of the Deaf. "Many signs have more than one variation, and the signed sentences show how such variations can be applied. Kudos to the NTID team for this wonderful and educational tool."



Families of deaf children, teachers and school staff, deaf people improving their English, interpreting students, and anyone who wants to learn ASL are potential users of this new dictionary.

The cost is \$50. More information can be found at <http://www.rit.edu/ntid/dig>. To order directly, go to the RIT bookstore at www.bookstore.rit.edu. In the Merchandise section, go to Deafness Videos and CD's, or call 585-475-2501 (voice). If you have any questions, contact the Project Director at dig@rit.edu.

Geoff Poor is an associate professor and Coordinator of NTID's Office of Communication Assessment Services.

Announcing NCSET's new Web site

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) has a new Web site: www.ncset.org. The site offers topical information on 26 diverse topics in secondary education and transition; E-News, NCSET's online newsletter with information and links to publications, events, funding opportunities, Web sites, and national resources; Publications, providing full text of all NCSET publications; and Events.

NCSET's mission is to create opportunities for youth with disabilities to achieve successful futures. The organization is a partnership of six organizations across the country and is headquartered at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. NCSET is funded by a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Goodbye TTY, Hello Internet Relay Service!

by Regina Kiperman

How often do I use a TTY? I would say once or twice a week, maybe less. I'm still making calls to communicate with hearing persons and family members, but now I don't need to restrict my telephone communication exclusively to TTY.

I am very pleased to say that, using available computer technology, all I need to do is simply access the relay service Web site and dial up a relay operator to place a call. As a user, I prefer the text-based relay service rather than standard TTY because there are many useful features and characteristics available on the Web sites of relay services while conversing through a relay operator. These varying features and characteristics allow me to play with the text to enlarge fonts and text display sizes for easier viewing or add the emotion icons or customize the background color while the relay operator is typing.

In addition, users are able to initiate multiple calls simultaneously. I once made three calls with three relay operators online at the same time by jumping from one screen to another to talk with a hearing person! It might be overwhelming to talk to several operators almost at the same time, but it saves a great deal of time. The other thing I love about using a relay service online is that while my call is going on, I can access email and/or surf the Web simultaneously and in the same one place (my computer!) instead of only being able to talk to a relay operator via TTY. At the end of conversations online, I can save a conversation and/or print it out as well.

Also, I want you to be advised that the relay services have language preferences such as English, Spanish, and French Creole. And, even long distance calls on the Internet are free and

unlimited! Many Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are using the relay service on the Internet for making calls with hearing people and friends, making an appointment, even making conference calls.

Besides those advantages of the Internet relay services, I want you be aware of some flaws and problems you might experience. For instance, I found a problem with saving a conversation on a disk as well as with printing it. To overcome the problem, I scrolled down the conversation on the screen to highlight, copy, and paste it in Microsoft Word and saved it on my disk afterwards. With some of those relay services, you won't encounter this particular problem. Also, I want you to be advised about the other disadvantage of using the relay services on the Internet—you do not have a feature that allows receiving messages from people similar to the auto-answering machine available on TTY.

Some of the relay services have different screen set ups. One of the services has one screen where you read the message from the relay operator and type your message on the same screen. Another relay service has two separate screens where the one screen on the top is used by the relay operator while you type your message on the bottom screen.

You can visit the different relay services available on the Internet. The following are their Web sites: www.sprintrelayonline.com – Sprint; www.att.com/relay - AT&T; www.ip-relay.com - MCI WorldCom; www.hiprelay.com – Hamilton. The bottom line is I encourage you to experience firsthand using the relay services on the Internet, and you will know which fits your preference the best! Go and experiment!

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R·I·T

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