

NETAC networks

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

October 2004

PEPNet Outcomes Assessment

by Gerard Walter

The Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) is part of the Postsecondary Education Programs Network (PEPNet*) and is required to provide its federal funding source evidence of outcomes resulting from its programs. As a result, PEPNet is conducting a study to assess its impact on enhancing the access and quality of services provided to students who are deaf or hard of hearing in postsecondary education.

In the past, PEPNet has focused on documenting outputs, which are the services that have been provided, the publications produced, the conferences held, consultations provided, etc. Now we must gather information about what impact these activities have had on improving the way services are provided to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in the postsecondary setting. In short, we need to discover whether PEPNet has made a difference.

To accomplish this task, the PEPNet directors have established a task force to document outcomes that have resulted from the existence of PEPNet. Members of the task force include Pat Billies (NETAC), Dave Buchkoski (MCPO), Annette Leonard (WROCC), Marcia Kolvitz (PEC), and Jerry Walter (NETAC). Dr. Russ French and Dr. Judy Boser of the University of Tennessee's Institute for Assessment and Evaluation will be acting as consultants to the project. In addition to the task force members, Mandy McCurry (WROCC), Mary Morrison (WROCC), Cindy Camp (PEC), Beth Case (PEC), Jane Nunes (NETAC), Ginny Chiaverina (MCPO), and Denise Kavin (MCPO) will be assisting the task force in collection of data in their regions.

The task force has decided to use focus group meetings as the primary method of data collection and plans to conduct such meetings in a variety of venues across the country during the winter and spring. The meetings will focus on issues such as changes in programming, practice, and policy that have occurred as a result of PEPNet. When the meetings are completed, common themes will be highlighted, which will form the basis of the final report. The plan is to conduct the focus groups with individuals who have been consumers of the technical assistance provided by one of the PEPNet regional centers.

In September the individuals named above gathered at Harper College near Chicago for a two-day training session on proper techniques for conducting focus groups. The training was led by Drs. French and Boser and stressed the questions necessary to stimulate the kind of discussion that will elicit appropriate feedback from focus group participants. At this meeting a list of sites for conducting focus groups was tentatively developed.

This format will give participants the opportunity to provide input about the effects of the PEPNet programs. The role of group

members will be to share experiences about how their institution/organization/agency was better able to provide services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing as a result of PEPNet. We expect that the time commitment will be about one to one-and-one-half hours.

In addition to focus groups, people will have the opportunity to respond to the targeted questions individually by going to <http://clipboard.rit.edu/takeSurvey.cfm?id=29D273>. If you go to this site, please complete the requested demographic information and answer the questions. Your responses are greatly appreciated. Before you answer the questions, you may want to visit the PEPNet Web site at www.PEPNet.org and update yourself with activities offered by PEPNet through its regional centers.

We plan to complete data collection in April, analyze the responses in May and June, and have our final report completed by July 1, 2005. The report will focus on the stated goals of PEPNet, the outputs resulting from PEPNet's operations through its four regional centers, and the outcomes articulated through the focus groups and the online questionnaire responses. Coordination of the analysis and final report will be conducted by the consultants at the University of Tennessee.

Finally, if you are invited to participate in a focus group, please make every effort to do so. If you do not receive an invitation for a focus group, then go online and complete the questionnaire at the site listed above. Also, encourage your colleagues who have had experience with PEPNet to respond. Your input is important to all of us at NETAC and others associated with PEPNet. Thank you for your participation.

** PEPNet consists of four regional centers: The Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach (MCPO), at Saint Paul College - A Community & Technical College; Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) at Rochester Institute of Technology; Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville; and the Western Region Outreach Center & Consortia (WROCC) at California State University - Northridge.*

Gerard G. Walter is Senior Researcher at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology.



The Director's column

by Dianne Brooks

This year NETAC will initiate, along with the three other regional centers, a critical self-evaluation process: the PEPNet Outcomes Assessment. Details regarding the process are provided elsewhere in this edition of *NETAC Networks*. Suffice it to say this is a critical effort that we are undertaking within the framework of the PEPNet Strategic Plan.

As NETAC nears its tenth anniversary as a participating member in the PEPNet "family," we continue to value the efforts of the many individuals and affiliate institutions who have collectively contributed to the success of both NETAC and PEPNet. As we implement the PEPNet Outcomes Assessment process, we are undertaking an opportunity to not only assess our collective and long-term impact over the past nine years, but also to discover opportunities to meet future challenges.



The five-volume videotape series and accompanying Web site represent yet another NETAC goal that has far exceeded expectations. In undertaking the production of this effort, NETAC has attempted to contribute to the success of future generations of deaf and hard-of-hearing youth and adults by providing examples of a wide array of career achievements that deaf and hard-of-hearing people have attained. It is hoped that these career stories will provide incentive, motivation, and inspiration not only to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, but also to parents, professionals, and service providers. Additionally, the series aims to describe career success in terms of a wide variety of opportunities ranging from academic to vocational to trade occupations. Work is progressing on the final two volumes of the series.

On the "home front," NETAC is hard at work on the first **Western New York Transition Event** that is being planned for Spring 2005 in partnership between NETAC, the Rochester School for the Deaf, St. Mary's School for the Deaf, and WHOLE ME, Inc.—a Syracuse, community-based organization serving deaf and hard-of-hearing children in upstate New York. The outcome of this effort is expected to be a "packaged" best-practices program model for future dissemination.

These outcomes represent just a few of NETAC's continuing efforts to provide far-reaching, innovative, and quality contributions to improve educational access and enhance educational opportunities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. As many individuals and institutions continue to work with NETAC toward this goal, we look forward to yet another successful and productive year.

Updates

Last Spring NETAC announced the completion of what is believed to be the first and only **Online Notetaker Training Program**. The development of this program represents a joint effort between NETAC, Camden County College, and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). The program has taken off, and in the short time it has been available has far exceeded our expectations. To date, more than 500 individuals have registered for the program; 300 have completed the training and more than 200 are currently in training. These figures continue to grow on a month-by-month basis. In addition, NETAC has received many inquiries regarding the use of the program with other disabled populations and the potential to adapt the program to other languages such as Spanish. Needless to say, we are very pleased with the results of this joint effort, and particularly pleased that it is offered free of charge.

Similarly, NETAC's videotape series, "**Achieving Goals – Career Stories of Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing**," continues to garner award after award. The series' most recent, and perhaps most prestigious, recognition has been an award by the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. The 2004 Media Access Award of Excellence will be presented at a formal ceremony in California in January 2005. The California Governor's Committee Media Access Awards is "an annual entertainment industry event honoring media and entertainment productions and individuals that have done an exemplary job in promoting employment for and accurate portrayals of people with disabilities. The event also recognizes the achievements of professionals with disabilities." Kudos to the NETAC/NTID production team of Pat Billies, Dave Conyer, and Don Feigel, and to those colleagues who assisted NETAC in the selection of interviewees, as well as those interviewees who volunteered their time to take part in the production.

NETAC Networks is 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

Unless otherwise noted, contact Florence Cooney, NETAC/Maryland Site Coordinator, 410-455-4369 (v), 410-455-4553 (tty), Fcooney@ccbcmd.edu, for more information about the following events:

- Saturday, October 23, 7:00 p.m., Maryland School for the Deaf Homecoming Football game including an exhibition booth, 101 Clarke Place, Frederick.
- Sunday, October 24, 1-4 p.m., The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore's "Third Disabilities Awareness Expo," featuring exhibition booths, wheelchair basketball game, Rosenbloom Owings Mills Jewish Community Center, 3506 Gwynnbrook Avenue, Baltimore.
- Tuesday, November 9, 9:30-11:30 a.m., NETAC/MD Consortium Meeting, CCBC Catonsville.
- Thursday, November 18, 1:00 p.m., PEPNet Focus Group Session, location TBA.

Massachusetts

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

- Wednesday, November 3, CareerFest, a transition and career awareness program for middle and high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester.

New York

- Wednesday, November 17, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., HES College/Transition Fair, LaGuardia Community College Little Theatre, 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City. NETAC will present the "Financing Your Education" package to HES parents; anyone is welcome to attend this workshop. For more information, contact Desiree Duda at nycnetac@optonline.net
- Friday and Saturday, April 29-30, 2005, "Life is Full of Choices...Take Your Pick," Western New York transition activity for middle and high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing, Camp Weona, Gainsville. For more information, contact Sherlea Dony, 585-475-7567 (v/tty), saddhd@rit.edu

Pennsylvania:

- Tuesday and Wednesday, November 2-3, PANETAC Annual Statewide Conference, State College, Penn Stater Conference Center. For more information, contact the PA NETAC Coordinator, Lori Hutchison, 814-255-8275 (voice); 814-255-5873 (tty), lhutchison@state.pa.us.

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

Western New York transition activity postponed until spring

by Sherlea Dony



The Western New York transition activity, "Life is Full of Choices...Take Your Pick," originally scheduled for October 15-16, has been postponed to April 29-30, 2005.

Because of a date conflict with one of the schools, the planning committee decided to reschedule the event. Although the planning committee wanted to schedule it before spring, winter's unpredictability made us

wary. So spring it is. The location will be the same: Camp Weona in Gainsville, NY.

This event is primarily for middle and high school students who are not college bound. A variety of activities are planned from age-specific career interest activities, to rope climbing, socializing with new friends from WNY, and enjoying entertainment and nature. Parents are invited to join their child for Saturday's events.

For more information about this event, contact Sherlea Dony, NETAC Upstate NY coordinator, saddhd@rit.edu, 585-475-7567, or Chris Kovar, WHOLE ME, Inc., wholemeinc@juno.com, 315-685-1576.

Sherlea Dony is the NETAC Upstate New York coordinator.

The Miracle of Technology (My CI Journey)

by Patricia Lago-Avery

I never gave much thought to the concept of “technology” before arriving at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf/Rochester Institute of Technology as a graduate intern in August 1976. Soon after that I was hired to work as a counselor, providing both career and personal counseling to deaf and hard-of-hearing students and would remain at NTID/RIT until June 2000. During those 24 years, my life became submerged in all types of technology that is used in a variety of careers such as engineering, business, photography, printing, and computers. The range and breadth, as well as the fast pace of changes in the world of technology, are astounding. And much had changed between 1976 and now.

Like many other people, I have benefited greatly from these changes. I certainly enjoyed the benefit of new hearing aid technology that allowed me to graduate from a body hearing aid to the smaller behind-the-ear aids when they became more powerful for individuals with profound hearing losses. And in 1985 two events involving technology would further change my life. The first was getting a computer in my office, which I promptly ignored for four months because I definitely was not a tech person. The second was meeting one of my new students who had a cochlear implant. That student was one of the first of several individuals to get a cochlear implant, but his experience was not a positive one. Through the years I would have several more students enter my office who had cochlear implants, some who had positive experiences and others who had not.

Although I did not give much thought to the technology of cochlear implants for myself during the mid 80’s to mid 90’s, that was about to change. I have Usher Syndrome IIA. This is a condition that has caused me to experience progressive hearing and vision loss throughout my life. When I was 6 years old, my parents discovered I had a moderate hearing loss. At the age of 15, it changed to severe and then to profound by the time I reached the age of 21. By the age of 32, I had lost most of my ability to discriminate speech sounds. I was 24 years old when I found out I have Usher Syndrome. It was then I realized that my vision was on the decline as well.

I had accepted being a deaf person and basically felt very comfortable in my work environment and my personal life. My deafness did cause problems in communication with family members with the exception of my husband, who uses sign language. It also became more difficult to communicate in general when my vision became worse. So by the time I was 45 years old, I started to think about how a cochlear implant might be of benefit to me as a deaf-blind person. I certainly did not have the option of getting my vision back, which would have been my first choice, so my focus turned toward the issue of regaining some of my hearing. I felt it would help keep me in touch with my world. It would take me seven more years before I was ready to move more assertively toward the possibility of hearing and understanding sounds again.

My Journey with the Cochlear Implant Technology

The Final Push: When looking back on the past few years, I am able to pinpoint two events that happened simultaneously that helped propel me to the decision to obtain a cochlear implant. The first was that I could no longer recognize and identify environmental sounds. Because of this loss, I felt less secure in my

surroundings because I had no visual field to help keep me safe. The second was the vast improvement in the technology being used with the cochlear implants. It also helped that a few close friends received cochlear implants and were able to share their experiences with me. At this point in my life, I felt I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. And so I began to learn as much as possible about cochlear implants and simultaneously began the evaluation process.

Evaluation Process: The evaluation process was pretty cut and dried and basically the same for everyone. My cochlear implant team was housed at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York.

My first step was to meet with the Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist for an examination and discussion. Then followed three appointments with an audiologist for audiological exams. Next I was required to have a CAT Scan and shots to protect me from the possibility of contracting meningitis. Last, and this was optional, was an appointment with a psychologist for me and my husband, Joe.

I basically knew by the time I finished my first appointment with Dr. Orlando that I would follow through with getting the cochlear implant. However, I let myself flow through the evaluation process, keeping in mind that I could always change my mind. I went into this process with low expectations. I knew I would be happy if all I got from the cochlear implant was the ability to hear and understand environmental sounds and to hear enough to improve my lipreading ability.

My pre-cochlear implant testing showed that I had zero discrimination ability and a profound hearing loss in the pure tone average in both of my ears. The CAT Scan showed that my cochlea was intact and could receive an implant. Surgery was scheduled for October 17, 2000. I chose to have my implant done in my right ear, which was the ear I had used my hearing aid with since I was 15 years old. I had not used a hearing aid in my left ear for many years.

Being Implanted and Hooked Up: The surgery was uneventful, getting underway at 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 17. However, the big day came on November 19. Between the surgery date and hook up date, I shed a few tears worrying that the CI would be a failure. But within one-and-half hours after Dr. Orlando started the mapping process of my body processor, all my fears vanished when he turned it on and I heard his voice and then I heard Joe talking to me.

The cochlear implant consists of internal and external components. The internal parts are what the surgeon implants in your cochlea and in your skull. The external parts are the processors. I have two processors. One is called the Body Worn Processor (BWP), which looks like a big, body-type hearing aid and the other a Behind the Ear Processor (BTE), which looks like a behind-the-ear hearing aid. Both processors send and receive data through a wire that ends with an enclosed coil, held in place on the head with a magnet embedded in the skull during surgery. I will not go into all the details of how the CI works in this article. That information can be found on the Internet under the topic of cochlear implants. Basically the processor works like a mini

Through the years I would have several more students enter my office who had cochlear implants, some who had positive experiences and others who had not.

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Access Issues and Answers

You can't MAKE it fit!

by Jane Jarrow

Let's be honest. How many of the clothes in your wardrobe have labels inside that read, "one size fits all?" And of the ones that DO bear such labels, I'll bet we are not talking about tailored garments that are a close match to your frame. The only thing I have in my closet that fits the definition are a few ponchos that you can throw over your head and blanket whatever lies beneath.

While there may be some circumstances in which "One size fits all" can be appropriate, I would maintain that services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing is not one of them. Students who fall into these categories come with audiograms that cover a wide range, and even the configuration of the audiogram tells you little about the kind of support services that are needed to provide good educational support to the student.

Age of onset of the hearing loss, type of loss (conductive v. sensori-neural), and even the age at which appropriate amplification was provided can make a huge difference in determining appropriate services. Student A, who has a moderate hearing loss but was able to fake his way through life by watching and responding appropriately to those around him into his early school career before getting hearing aids, may have significantly more problems in effectively using hearing (and need significantly more support) than Student B, whose severe hearing loss was discovered, and aided, while she was an infant. Then, of course, there are all those environmental factors that can influence the deaf or hard-of-hearing individual's ability to function effectively, from the acoustics in the room, to the amount of extraneous noise in the environment, to the number and placement of people participating in the exchange.

Why, then, do I continue to see posts from service providers on various listservs that start out with saying, "We are thinking of switching from Typewell to C-Print®..." or "Which do you think is better, C-Print or RTC?" or "If we are providing quality sign language interpreters, why do we have to provide RTC to a student who prefers it?" or (perhaps the worst mistake) "If we have two deaf students in the same class, why can't we provide them with the same service? Why should we have to provide an interpreter to one and RTC to the other for the same class?"

Certainly, some of the problem stems from the fact that deafness/hearing loss is a low-incidence disability and thus many folks have less experience and less understanding of the unique characteristics of the population.

Some of the problem probably arises because the significant differences in various available accommodations are a contrast to the more limited options available for other populations. After all, there are only two major choices in Braille—standard Braille or Nemeth code. While some folks do train notetakers specifically for various populations (notably, for deaf/hard-of-hearing folks), generally we look for the same kind of notes for students with a variety of disabling conditions from LD to ADD to quadriplegia. The accommodation of extended time may be given for different reasons for different groups, and the amount of extended time assigned may be different, but the accommodation itself is a constant. Not so when it comes to services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

I think the biggest problem arises because service providers forget (or never understood in the first place!) that the different options available out there were created to fill DIFFERENT needs. This is not a new discussion. Years ago, when the options were an interpreter or...an interpreter!...service providers questioned why they needed to provide interpreters using different sign systems within the same institution. Why couldn't they just say, "we provide ASL interpreters" or "we use only Signed English interpreters" and leave it at that? The answer was (and is!) that not all deaf students can effectively use any one system. The students who use ASL may not be able to use Signed English, while those who use Signed English systems may be totally lost watching ASL.

In just the same way, the myriad of options now available in support of deaf and hard-of-hearing students (from various sign systems to various notetaking systems to ever-evolving technologies) provide very different advantages/disadvantages to segments of the population. Realtime captioning has been a tremendous boon for

deaf or hard-of-hearing students who need more of a word-for-word translation of what is being said, AND who have a reading level sufficient to manage not only the flow of the written words across the screen, but the task of resolving mis-captioned material as it comes through. (The other night I watched a news program with the captions on and saw, "You'll notice that the child in the picture is wearing a carry button.") But realtime captioning is notoriously LESS useful for math and some science classes than is sign language interpreting, IF the student can read sign. That's because mathematical formulas and symbols are not linear and don't always translate well to the RTC medium. (Think, "Two pi r over d minus xy cubed.") Sign language allows a more graphic presentation of relative placement of such things.

I suppose I get most annoyed when I read a post from someone who suggests that something like C-Print or Typewell are just poor (lesser) forms of RTC. Whether or not you support the use of systems like C-Print or Typewell (or RTC, for that matter!), they were not developed for the same reasons, they were never meant to be used in the same way, and it is patently unfair to engage in direct comparison of their effectiveness/output. I would submit that if you cannot legitimately compare effectiveness across such very different services, neither can you blithely substitute one for another in a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

One size doesn't fit all. We insist that decisions about whether to accommodate must be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the documentation presented. Don't forget that decisions as to HOW we accommodate should also be case by case. Covering up the differences by throwing that one-size-fits-all blanket (or service!) over the top simply doesn't work.

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.

"If we are providing quality sign language interpreters, why do we have to provide RTC to a student who prefers it?"

The Miracle of Technology (My CI Journey)

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computer that transports sounds to the cochlea, which transports the sound to the brain. It bypasses the outer and middle ear apparatus.

Hearing Sounds Again: So now I am hearing sounds again at the age of 52, and it feels like it is in my brain! People often ask if I hear like a hearing person, and my answer is I do not know how a hearing person hears. I can only respond to how I hear now compared to how I used to hear. I also know that I hear things that I never heard before. I hear in ways I never expected to hear. Some people, including my audiologist, have told me that the results of my post-cochlear-implant audiological exams really exceeded all expectations. As measured audiometrically, my functioning hearing six months after being implanted was much like an individual with a mild hearing loss and my discrimination ability with short sentences was 99 percent. It has been 13 months since I received my CI, and I continue to experience some improvements in hearing functioning.

Because I heard sounds as a child and into my teens, I did not need aural rehabilitation. I understood most sounds when I first heard them with my CI. But with new sounds I kept having to ask my husband, "What is that?" So it has been a year of learning some new sounds and hearing old sounds that I knew from the past. The following are excerpts from a letter to my family and friends detailing my first 48 hours of hearing with the BWP.

November 20, 2002

Yesterday I was turned on to my CI at approximately 4:15 p.m. after a series of tests and mapping of the processor. Mark mapped my processor with three different programs for me to try for the next few days until I to go back to see him on Friday. So the first thing I heard, after the individual tones, was Mark's voice. At first it was like a shock that I not only heard his voice but I understood what he was saying. Up until that time Joe was interpreting everything that Mark was saying to me. At first I was not sure if I was understanding Mark because the sound sounded different, but also it seemed weird to me because it was like the words were in my head and I was understanding with my head instead of having the sound go through the hearing aid into my ear and trying to travel to my brain and most of it getting lost along the way. Now it is just like the sound goes into the part of my brain that needs to interpret the sound.

Walking down the hall of the hospital I could hear people's voices that were many feet away. I also realized that I did not hear noises but mostly just people talking and footsteps on the floor. In the past all I could hear was all the noise that masked over voices.

We left the hospital at 5:30 p.m. and it was after dark. The car engine is loud, and then I hear this blinking....blinking....blinking. At first I did not know what that was but then realized that the noise sounded like how the turn signal looks when it is blinking, so sure enough that was what it was. Then Joe started talking with me and I was thinking, why is he talking to me he knows I cannot understand and see in the dark. However, everything he was saying was turning into words in my head and I understood him. There was only a very faint light on the side of his face from the vanity mirror on my side of the car. At the same time I was listening to the motor of the van: how it sounds when it is idling, how it sounds when he first takes off from a stop light, how it sounds when he is driving along, and then he is talking to me some more and I

understand everything he is saying.

We have never been able to communicate in the dark under any situations in the past. The other thing I noticed is that I am not bothered by noises in the car. Before all the noise from the car would override voices. Now it is like the voice in the car is the dominant sound.

Other sounds I noticed:

- *When I made a very light breakfast of toast and peanut butter, I heard the following sounds: Picking up jar from the lazy susan, heard the jar when I sat it down, heard the lid when I was taking it off the jar, heard the smearing sounds of putting peanut butter on the toast, heard the water gurgling down my throat as I drank it.*

- *Feet on the tile and wood floors*
- *Water from the different sinks in the house all sound different*
- *I hear the dogs' happy sounds when I am petting them.*

People often ask if I hear like a hearing person, and my answer is I do not know how a hearing person hears.

Thirteen months have passed since I wrote that letter and I am still amazed at what I

hear and the quality of sounds in my life. After six weeks, I began wearing the BTE in place of the BWP. The only time I wear the BWP is when I know I am going to have long phone conversations with my parents or friends, because it does work a little better than the BTE. I expected to hear voices and understand environmental sounds again before I had the cochlear implant. However, I did not expect to understand people who were talking to me when I was not using my lipreading skills. Neither did I expect to use a telephone again or enjoy music again. I hear birds singing, I can talk with my family and hearing friends on the phone and have just now started using the phone with strangers. I either understand about 95% of conversations with strangers or nothing at all. Therefore, I still use the TTY on occasion. I do not hear like a hearing person. I cannot localize sounds, and I do not always understand everything that is being said 100% of the time. I need to be paying attention to understand everything. Sometimes I can understand parts or all of a radio newscast and other times nothing. What makes the difference, I do not know. I know that my brain works differently but do not know why. Last but not least, a CI is not a glorified hearing aid. It is much more. And background noise is not an issue for me most of the time unless I am in an ultra noisy place. I still use sign language in my life and my deaf and hard-of-hearing friends are still a part of me, as well as belonging to the deaf community. I never want to change that.

The impact of a CI has been profound physiologically, sociologically, and psychologically. Most of the impact has been positive, but some of it has been negative. The negative impact has been the realization of how difficult my life was before, when I was functioning without any beneficial hearing and very limited vision. It was kind of like going through the mourning process backwards, grieving for all the things I missed throughout the years. But I try to balance those feelings with the understanding and appreciation of all I have gained. With my decision to have a cochlear implant, I have chosen a path that is right for me. Having sound has broadened my world and has made me feel more safe and connected as a deaf-blind person. And yes, I am still a deaf-blind person when I do not have my CI on but a blind person with a mild hearing loss when I am connected.



Career Day at Austine

by Janet Dickinson

June 7 was a career-filled day for Austine students! Vermont NETAC, a program of Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing affiliated with RIT/NTID, and the Austine School, co-sponsored a Career Day for middle and high school students. All day, students were immersed in activities related to the world of work. I coordinated the event for Vermont NETAC, and Carole Forest led all of the workshop sessions.

The day started with a workshop that exposed students to different types of work. Students rotated to different stations that were led by teachers. The teachers took on roles of professionals in different fields such as graphic design, carpentry, and real estate, to name a few. Students were able to ask a lot of questions, and they learned about many different careers.

The second workshop consisted of a panel presentation with five different presenters, four of whom were Austine alum. Thanks very much to Paul Batch, Shellene (Star) Johnson, Mark Limoges, Debbie McKinney, and William Pendlebury, the presenters on the panel. Carole Forest asked each presenter to describe their first job, how they got to their present job, how they interact with and deal with co-workers and supervisors, their favorite part of their job, and lastly, she asked them to give the students a word of wisdom to help them with their future careers. Students were fascinated to learn about the panelists' experiences and asked many questions. They were particularly interested in how much

money the panel members earned!

After lunch, students attended two more workshops. During the first workshop, they learned about four college programs: Community College of Vermont, Johnson State College, Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and Northwest Connecticut Community College.

The last workshop focused on interviewing skills and started with a skit performed by Sumit Malik, Jennilyn Rosa, and Simon Walters showing "The Bad Interview" and "The Good Interview." In both skits, Simon interviewed Jennilyn for a job with Sumit as the interpreter. (Simon was playing a hearing interviewer.) In skit one, Jennilyn's clothes were sloppy, she was rude to the interviewer, and overall, her behavior was very poor. Her behavior improved a great deal from the first to the second skit, and Simon offered her the job!

Sumit led a group discussion about interviewing behavior following the skits. After this discussion, all students got to practice interviewing skills in mock group interviews with teachers. Everyone learned a lot about how to conduct themselves during an interview during this workshop.

Thanks to the Austine School for hosting this Career Day and to Carole Forest for her creative ideas and great job as the workshop leader.

Janet Dickinson is the Vermont NETAC coordinator.

A busy fall in Downstate New York

by Desiree Duda



Fall 2004 has been busy for the NETAC NY Downstate office. The following is a summary of the various workshops presented in the NYC area. If you would like to invite NETAC to present at your institution, please contact me at nycnetac@optonline.net, 203-854-5371.

At LaGuardia Community College's Opening Sessions, faculty members attended an orientation to the On-Line Notetaker Training Program, a collaborative program created between Camden County College, NETAC, and NTID. This is a great resource for training notetakers and for students to learn how to take notes for themselves!

At the LaGuardia Community College, Division of Adult and Continuing Education Open House, individuals attended a workshop on the new C-Print[®] On-line Training and the voice recognition system software.

In celebration of Deaf Awareness Week (DAW), NETAC hosted a workshop on "Achieving Goals! Career Stories of Individuals Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing." Young Hae Park, Assistant Director of NTID Admissions, presented to students and staff. NETAC invites you to become one of the many individuals

who post their name and background on this useful Web site. To review and input your information, go to www.netac.rit.edu and link to "Achieving Goals." Also during DAW week, NETAC hosted an information table at the biannual Deafest. Hundreds of participants and cultural events were a treat to all.

Most recently, I presented many of NETAC and PEPNet's new programs and materials at the CUNY Coalition on Student Disability Issues. This included an orientation to the On-line Notetaker Training program, the Handbook of Templates, the "Make a Difference" CD, and an update on C-Print[®] issues.

Soon I will present at the NYC Department of Education, Hearing Education Services' annual College Fair. This will be the third year NETAC has presented to parents, "Financing Your Education," a Web site that contains information about financing a college education (www.netac.rit.edu). During the 2004-2005 academic year, HES transition teachers also will be provided an orientation to "Starting Off on the Right Foot," a transition training program for teachers, counselors, coordinators, and parents.

**Desiree Duda is the NETAC Downstate New York coordinator.*



These students promptly picked up their cues

by Brad Buran

When I first came to Boston to pursue a Ph.D. at MIT, I barely knew anyone except for a few people who used Cued Speech. Within a month, two of my classmates had begun learning how to cue. They picked up the system within a few days. Slow at first, they developed their speed and accuracy, becoming fluent within a few months. By then, five more of my friends had started cueing on their own. There clearly was an interest among many people in the school community to learn how to cue, so we organized two workshops subsidized jointly by the university disability services office and my department, Health Sciences and Technology. More than 40 people turned out for these workshops, and this sparked an interest among the local cueing community in hosting monthly workshops and activities, which we are currently organizing.

The elegance of Cued Speech is how simple and easy it is to learn. Yet, at the same time there is no compromise in the information I receive, either when sitting in class or chatting with friends who cue. All the elements present in spoken conversation are present in visual form in Cued Speech. You can show tone and inflection on the hands and face to indicate stress or express things such as sarcasm or annoyance.

Cued Speech was developed to address the literacy problems that many deaf people have. While many deaf people use ASL as their primary means of communication, its grammar and syntax are different from those of English. Just like a native user of

French or Spanish, a native user of ASL must learn English as a second language. However, it is difficult for deaf people to learn English because it is a spoken language. Much of the phonetic information is available visually only on the lips, making it difficult for a deaf person to understand. It is impossible to distinguish the words “bat,” “mat,” and “pat” by lipreading alone. However, if we disambiguate this information using the hand, then it becomes immediately obvious what the word is. Because Cued Speech is meant to convey spoken language, the handshapes and hand placements used in Cued Speech must be based on the phonetic structure used in these languages.

Realizing this, Dr. Orin Cornett developed the system based on the consonant/vowel segment commonly found in many spoken languages. Each handshape represents the consonant, while the position represents the vowel. The system is designed so that any sound that appears the same on the mouth will appear different on the hand, while any sound that appears the same on the hand will be different on the mouth. By combining both the lips and the hands, it is possible to convey spoken language without ambiguity and provide access to the spoken languages commonly used in the classroom.

Brad Buran is currently working toward his doctorate from the department of Health Sciences and Technology at MIT.

R·I·T

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This publication was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and produced through a cooperative agreement between RIT and OSERS (H324A010002-01). The contents herein do not necessarily represent the Department of Education's policy nor endorsement by the Federal Government.