Abstract

The Design and Use of a Language Facility for the Instruction of Sign Language Interpreters

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The task of sign language interpreting requires the interpreter to change a spoken English message into a signed message and a signed message into a spoken English message. When done well the interpreter's performance is deceptively effortless and uncomplicated. An interpreter's education includes achieving fluency in American Sign Language and English as well as mastery of several hundred sub-tasks. Given the audio and visual nature of the required tasks, the use of audio and video technology is central to the preparation of ASL-English interpreters.A program designed to prepare ASL-English interpreters must have a language lab facility that is designed to simulate many different tasks. The minimal requirements for such a facility is to have each student's carrel equipped with a camera, videocassette playback/recorder, audiocassette playback/recorder, videotape monitor and headphones. In addition the equipment must be integrated in such a way as to maximize flexibility in function and ease of use for both students and instructors. At NTID we have successfully designed a language lab facility that provides a stimulating and creative environment for both students and instructors.Some of the notable features include: Students can individually control a carrel or the instructor can control all of the carrels from the instructor's station. Students can watch a video tape of a deaf person signing and create another videotape of the deaf person signing with the student's voice interpretation recorded on the videotape. Students can listen to an audio taped lecture and create a video tape of their signed interpretation of the lecture. Instructors can simultaneously send the same stimulus material to 10 students.