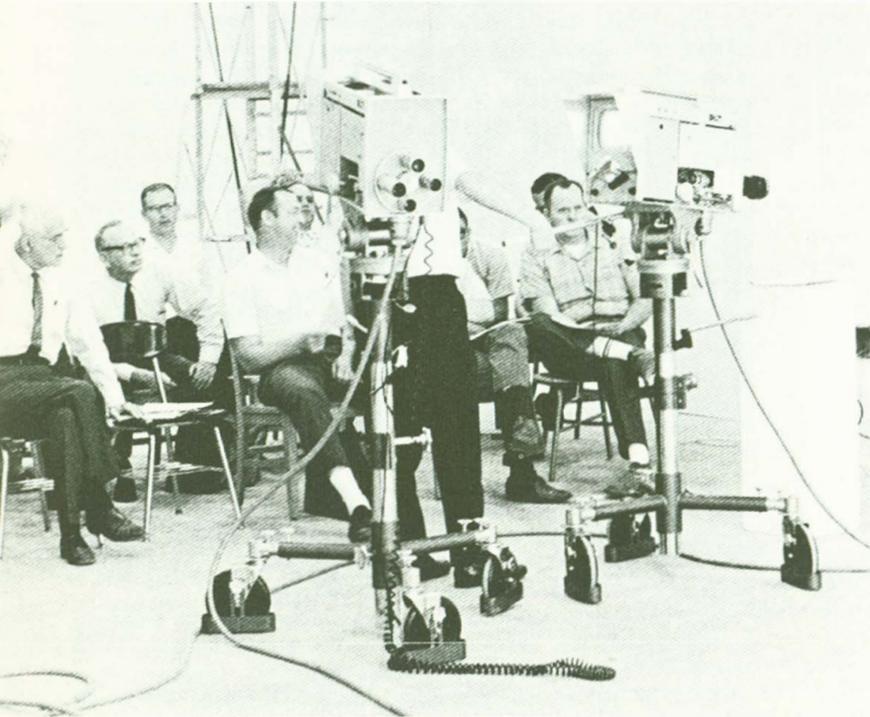


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Publication of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Rochester Institute of Technology



NTID's Research and Training Division

...to enhance the learning process...



TOP LEFT: RIT Television Center during summer training program.
LOWER LEFT: Dr. E. Ross Stuckless, director, Research and Training
Division. RIGHT: Robert R. Gates, (left), associate director for
training, and Richard Fendrich, interpreter.

Research and Training

"...systematically looking at what we're doing."

A National Technical Institute for the Deaf? . . . Why? . . . What will it offer? . . . Who will attend? . . . Where will it be located? . . . What will its objectives be? . . . How can it be done?

And that's how it started. Those were the questions of a few years ago, when people really started exploring the idea of a National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

Today, many of the old questions have been answered. Others are still being worked on.

In fact, the raising of questions and the search for answers is an everyday activity . . . it's the main thrust of NTID's Research and Training Division.

"Education will continue to evolve as a result of our systematically looking at what we're doing," says Dr. E. Ross Stuckless, the division's director. "We need to constantly ask questions, find solutions, analyze, and re-analyze in order to find what does facilitate learning."

Research and Training serves a far-reaching, long-range purpose at NTID. It was written into the guidelines that NTID should become more than an educational center; that it should also serve as a research facility, a training center, a practice teaching center, a demonstration center, a practicum setting. Research and Training provides the primary effort in meeting these objectives.

The division is responsible for continuing efforts in research and evaluation, orientation of RIT faculty and students to deafness, graduate training for specialists who plan to work with the deaf, and development of educational technology.

"Research and Training is an integral part of the total NTID program," says Stuckless. "We're concerned with program development and our responsibilities include not only our own students, but also far beyond that, to areas of national impact."



Left to right are: Student Assistant Stephen Berdy, Research Assistants Jon Rowleigh and Marilyn Enders.

The Research and Training Division is one of three major divisions at NTID; the other two are Instructional Affairs and Student Development.

Within the Division of Research and Training, responsibility is subdivided under the research component and the training component. The research component is comprised of three research associates and three research assistants whose professional backgrounds include experience in such areas as sociology, social psychology, educational technology, and scientific measurement.

There are several research projects being conducted at the present time. A longitudinal study of deaf and hearing students at RIT, in progress since last year, is a study of the academic and sociological variables affecting students in the two groups. A study entitled: "Student Characteristics and Success in NTID-sponsored Programs," is designed to yield information on how to match educational programs with deaf students' interests, aptitudes, and other characteristics. "Modification of Television to Present Verbal Information to Deaf Students", is a study of the effectiveness of various methods of presenting instructional material.

Other studies in progress are concentrated on topics such

as: RIT faculty perceptions, verbal problem solving, language proficiency, notetaking, telephone communications, single letter reception, housing arrangements, and evaluation of students' success in the vestibule programs.

Another significant research effort at NTID is the exploration of new visual techniques in teaching. According to Research Associate Lawrence Reiner, "The role of vision has been neglected for the most part, over the years. We're taking a good hard look at ways to improve the use of vision in teaching the deaf."

Dr. Stuckless feels that the division's organizational structure is a very important key to its effectiveness. He says, "There has always been about a 20-year lag for research to get into actual use in the classroom setting. This is the great benefit of research and training being coupled into one division; the results of our research efforts are immediately available to our teachers; we can present them with useful research information right away, through our various training programs."

Training efforts are directed toward two general groups: hearing persons within RIT who have considerable contact with the deaf students; and personnel throughout the country in need of training to work more effectively with deaf persons.

"The guidelines for NTID said that this should be a 'practicum setting', and this is where the training function comes into the picture," says Robert Gates, associate director for training.

Recent training activities have included several varieties of projects. During the summer months, new NTID staff members participated in a full-time training program known as Project NEST. The emphasis of this eight-week training program centered around communication with deaf students, educational technology, orientation to deafness, and extensive workshop activities which facilitated planning of course objectives, content, and evaluation procedures.

A nine-week student interpreter training program was conducted during the summer, also. "This seems to have been extremely successful," says Gates. "The six students were selected in accordance with their career interests, and each was assigned a deaf roommate for the summer. They were given very intensive full-time training in manual communication, and now they're assigned to the Division of Student Development, mainly to act as interpreters for student activities here on campus. So far we've been very happy with the results. They really got involved in the program and worked hard, right from the beginning. We think this is very definitely a big step in the right direction."

Other training activities include an in-service training program, a graduate internship program, and a resident advisor training institute. Inservice training includes staff colloquia on various topics, with guest speakers of prominence in fields relating to the deaf. One doctoral student served an internship at NTID throughout the past summer and, ". . . we're expecting somewhere between five and eight interns next year," says Gates.

A training institute for 52 RIT students who serve as resident advisors in the dormitories was conducted, with the prime purpose of developing sensitivity on the part of the resident advisors toward deaf students, who live in scattered locations throughout the RIT dormitories.

Gates' principle assistant is Dr. James DeNio, coordinator of short-term institutes. DeNio's responsibilities include such projects as conferences and workshops, centering around the various facets of education of the deaf.

NTID's Research and Training Division, though small in actual numbers, is big in dedication, big in enthusiasm.

It has to be.

It's the prime mover in NTID for evaluation of what is being done, how it's being done, and how it might be improved.

Or, as one Research and Training staffer summed it up: "Whatever *can* be done to enhance the learning process *must* be done."

Deaf Athletes at RIT

"...contributing significantly..."

It's history now.

Or at least part of the story is history . . . very significant history. It was made on Oct. 18, 1969, when a 165-pound half-back named Rich Olson became the first deaf person to score a touchdown in the annals of club football.

There are some who think this historic event was just a sample of the whole story . . . a story that's been developing for over a year . . . and whose best chapters may be yet to unfold.

Rich is one of a dozen who have already made their marks in athletics. His twin brother, Bob, is another fine con-

Football Coach Tom Coughlin, (left), gives instructions to deaf football players. RIT photographic student Rick Mergler, (in dark jacket), relays them in sign language to Jim Best, (bending down), and George Dorough (left), Don Tinsley, and twin brothers Bob and Rich Olson.



tributor to the Tiger team. In fact, right after Rich made history, Bob picked up a touchdown on a two-yard reverse, and became the second deaf person to score a touchdown in club football history.

Completing the lineup of deaf gridgers are: defensive guard George Dorough, an electrical engineering student from St. Augustine, Fla.; linebacker Jim Best, an architectural drafting student from Indianapolis; and defensive tackle Don Tinsley, a vestibule student from Indianapolis. The Olson brothers, from Salem, Ore., are both students in architectural drafting.

"There is no question that our deaf players are contributing significantly to the program," said RIT Head Coach Ken Davis. "In fact, they have proven they can do anything a hearing student can do. Looking at our deaf athletes, I can imagine the untapped deaf talent across the country. I hope we can convince a few more to come to RIT.

"At least half of our players know sign language and can communicate," added Bob Olson. In the huddle, quarterback John Marshall, a junior from Penn Yan Academy, flashes the number of the play with his fingers, and on defense, the captain hits his hip pad to signal a change.

All of RIT's coaches are determined to make the deaf students feel welcome in the athletic program, according to Athletic Director Louis A. Alexander, Jr. He commented: "Not only are they competing, but they are also contributing to the success of the program."

Two first-year NTID students: Bob Backofen, of Rockville, Conn.; and Tom Schejbal, of Omaha, Neb. compete on the cross-country team. Backofen is a graduate of the American School for the Deaf, and Schejbal is a graduate of the Nebraska (please turn page)

FOCAL POINT

Dr. William E. Castle
Dean, NTID

FOCAL POINT is a series of articles by contributing professionals dealing with current issues and topics of interest in education of the deaf. We welcome the comments and suggestions of our readers.

The programs at NTID are yet in their infancy. As our diploma and vestibule programs, educational support services, speech and hearing services, computer assisted instruction, and research and training activities are initiated and developed; we at NTID hope to make them strong by following a healthy set of principles. It will be my purpose here to suggest what some of these principles are.

The first and foremost principle is that of *focusing on students*. If our personnel or programs become self-centered rather than student-centered, we will have followed the path of many educational systems and our objectives will be lost.

A second and very basic principle is that of *flexibility*. We must be willing to change ourselves and our programs overnight, if need be, to accommodate the educational and vocational needs of the students. The vestibule faculty of today must be willing to be the support services or diploma faculty of tomorrow and

vice versa. The research and training staff must be willing to serve as well as be served; they should even be ready and willing to teach our students if the need prevails.

A third important principle is to *emphasize success over failure*. In a real sense, the success of deaf students at NTID is a measure of the success of our admissions programs, our evaluation procedures, our instructional approaches, our counseling, and our job placement efforts. During this interim phase of our operation we want to learn how to keep the attrition rate for deaf students as close to zero as possible. This will require a judicious blending of the emotional side with the technical side of the educative process.

The fast movement of today's technological world would suggest the need for still another principle, that of *compression of learning time*. We can no longer afford to take a full year to teach what can be and needs to be taught in one quarter. We must open our doors to educational technologies which can help speed up the processes of learning, such as mediated lectures, educational television, programmed learning, and computer assisted instruction.

The principle of *innovation* should foster the previous two principles. We need to be inventive. Educational television is next to useless if it is used unimaginatively. Only a creative approach to computer assisted instruction can make it useful for aiding deaf students with their hang-ups in English, reading, math, and science.

Goal setting is also an important principle. Unless we have a very good and very specific idea of what a student must learn to do in order to advance on to a new and more challenging task, we are apt to be wasting our time and his. The key question always is what must the student be able to do within each given learning segment. Secondary questions include whether the goal is realistic and whether it is actually germane to the student's interests and needs.

To aid and abet optimal adherence to all of the foregoing principles, at least two others are important. The first of these is the principle of *Documentation or data gathering*; the second is *cooperation among personnel*.

Unless we are willing to gather data about our students, ourselves, and our programs we cannot very well know how and when to change; we cannot find out what will or will not make us successful in our enterprise; we will not manage compressed learning which is useful; we will not be able to determine whether our innovations make a difference; and we will not find out whether our goals are appropriate for each student.

Finally, we cannot afford to build walls around ourselves or around our programs. We must cooperate among ourselves, and we must seek cooperation from and offer cooperation to the personnel and programs which make up the broader picture of the Rochester Institute of Technology, our sponsoring institution. It is only through cooperative energies that we will be able to get the job done.

School for the Deaf. Backofen, a biology major, is fifth man on the cross-country team, and tied for first place in a recent win over Utica College. He commented, "The deaf ran slow in high school. Here my teammates make me run faster to keep up with them. One teammate, Fred Bertoni, has learned sign language and always shows me the course we are about to run. I know sometimes I would get lost without him."

Back for what looks to be another successful year on the Tigers' swim team is Geoffrey Lowe, of Hinsdale, Ill., who is expected to be one of RIT's finest swimmers this winter. Geoff's performance last year earned him the nickname "Fish", and also earned him a spot on the United States swim team for the Eleventh International World Games for the Deaf, held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia this past August. He competed in the 100-meter freestyle race, making a personal record of 1:04.9.

In addition to Geoff, several NTID newcomers also participated in the World Games this past summer. Charles Mix, an Indiana School for the Deaf product from Gary, Ind., competed in the long jump event. Barbara Carr, from Pomona, Calif., a graduate of the California School for the Deaf at Riverside, took seventh place in the 400-meter freestyle with a personal time of 6:01.3. Carol Tufts, another CSD Riverside graduate, won a bout with Penumonia last spring and returned from the World Games with three medals. The 400-meter freestyle relay team, of which she was a member, set a new world record for the deaf with a team time of 4:48.3. Carol's two bronze medals were earned in the 100-meter free style and the 200-meter breaststroke. Mechanical engineering student Charles Johnson, of Lexington, Mass., picked up a silver medal at the World Games for placing second in the tennis mixed doubles. He also took seventh place in singles and sixth place

in men's doubles. He attended the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Lexington High School.

Other deaf students readying themselves for a competitive varsity swimming season are Gordon Miller, Byron Skidmore, and Bill Baggs. Miller is a vestibule student from Poughkeepsie, N. Y. and the New York School for the Deaf. Skidmore, of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, is a graduate of Cleveland Heights High School and is a vestibule student. Baggs is a vestibule student from Morreston, Ark. He is a graduate of the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Rich Steinbach, a freshman catcher from Springfield, N. J., helped the Tigers' fall baseball team wrap up a 5-3 season. The vestibule student is a graduate of the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf.

Two NTID students are members of the JV Soccer team. They are vestibule student George Kononenko, a graduate of the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf from Boonton, N. J.; and Mel Fros, a Gilbert High School graduate from Winsted, Conn. who majors in mathematics.

"RIT is providing a wonderful opportunity for the deaf in intercollegiate athletics," commented NTID instructor LeRoy L. Duning recently. Duning, who is quite active in deaf athletics and went with the U.S. team to Belgrade last summer as treasurer and table tennis coach, indicated that he thinks RIT's deaf athletes will contribute even more significantly in the future than they are at present.

Paul C. Peterson, NTID coordinator of cocurricular activities, concluded: "Most of the deaf athletes are participating with a non-selfish goal in mind. They feel they can better promote understanding between the deaf and hearing. And, I might add that, from my observations, that's just exactly what they're doing."

NTID Focus is published monthly at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology. Editorial Office is located in the RIT Public Relations Office. Editor: John W. Cox. Phone: (716) 464-2332.

"The Materials herein were produced in the course of an agreement with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare."

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Deaf cross-country runner Bob Backofen, (right), runs course with Dave Kosowski, RIT's top runner.



Barbara Carr, (left), admires one of three medals won by Carol Tufts at World Games for the Deaf last summer.
NTID ATHLETES STORY BEGINS ON PAGE THREE.

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