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NTID Wins \$482,000 Grant From National Science Foundation

February 22, 2007

Dr. Peter Hauser, of the Research and Teacher Education Department at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, has received a five-year, \$482,947 grant from the National Science Foundation to study how visual and gestural languages facilitate how people learn written English.

Hauser will be part of an international team of researchers who will investigate three strands of inquiry: language and the brain, co-led by Hauser; language structure and the visual modality; and developmental and sociocultural processes of visual learning. Other partners in the effort include Georgetown University, Rutgers University, and the Center for American Sign Language-English Bilingual Education and Research, a federally funded network of schools for the deaf and teacher-training centers.

The goal of the project is to conduct scientific studies to help understand how humans learn through the visual modality. More than 20 schools for the deaf will assist with transforming the science to teaching strategies in order to improve the language and literacy development of all deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Much of the research for the project will be led by deaf scientists. Deaf scholars also will participate as researchers and teachers through fellowships and assistantships.

Hauser will work with deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing undergraduate students from NTID and three of RIT's other colleges to develop ASL, cognitive and academic assessment tests for deaf children and adults; analyze the psychometric properties of these tests; and create video publishing techniques to disseminate the center's research results and technical reports in ASL. These tests will help researchers and educational diagnosticians appropriately evaluate deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals' skills. His team also will coordinate brain and language studies on visual learning and visual language conducted at Georgetown University, San Diego State University, and the University of California-Davis.

These studies will show how the brain develops different neural networks to help deaf individuals navigate through the world when relying on vision more than hearing individuals. In collaboration with other center projects, they will explore how to best teach deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals based on the unique strengths these individuals

naturally develop by placing a greater reliance on vision.

Hauser's grant is part of a larger NSF Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) award recently given to Gallaudet University.

NTID is the first and largest technological college in the world for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. One of eight colleges of RIT, NTID offers educational programs and access and support services to the 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from around the world who study, live, and socialize with 14,400 hearing students on RIT's Rochester, N.Y., campus.

Web address: <http://www.rit.edu/NTID>.

For more NTID news, visit <http://www/rit/ntid/newsroom>.

Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

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