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RIT Professor Earns Grant for Vocabulary Software to Aid Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

September 19, 2007

Professor Eugene Lylak of the Liberal Studies Department at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf has received a \$96,200 grant from the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation, Inc. for his project, "Web-based, Interactive Vocabulary Building and Grammar Improvement Software."

The grant will support the design and implementation of an interactive software package that meets the need for Web-based materials that deliver developmental English grammar and vocabulary practice for deaf students in middle and high school and in higher education. The software will be accessible to all teachers of the deaf in the United States and abroad, and will be flexible, so that it can be used outside deaf education, even in settings for speakers of other languages.

"New Web-based technologies show promise as a means to provide the direct instruction needed to overcome the challenges some deaf and hard-of-hearing students face in developing reading and writing skills," said Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, RIT vice president and CEO/dean for NTID. "We are proud to continue NTID's leadership in student-centered research and innovation with this project, and commend Dr. Lylak for his work to better the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing students."

Lylak has more than 30 years experience teaching students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. He has dedicated his research to creating instructional programs designed to assist deaf and hard-of-hearing students with vocabulary acquisition. Lylak will work with Norman Crozer, director of Disabled Services at Pierce College in Woodland Hills, Calif., who has been a teacher of the deaf since 1970.

The Pforzheimer Foundation has one philanthropic focus; the support of secondary education, specifically in the areas of adult education and literacy.

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