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NTID Receives \$2.2 Million to Understand How Math is Learned

NTID News - March 13, 2008

A four-year, \$2.2 million grant to study the way deaf and hard-of-hearing students learn math has been awarded to the Center for Education Research Partnerships at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

The grant was awarded by the National Institute for Child Health and Development at the National Institutes of Health.

"Deaf and hard-of-hearing students, including those with cochlear implants, frequently lag behind their hearing peers in mathematics achievement," said Marc Marschark, an RIT Professor and CERP director. "This is an incredible opportunity to work with students, parents and teachers to directly link research and practice."

More than 1,000 students - as young as age 5 to college students - will be tested in the United States and Scotland to evaluate math skills, cognitive abilities and motivation. The project is a collaboration with the University of Aberdeen, where Marschark holds an appointment in the School of Psychology.

"Our research here has shown that deaf learners of all ages learn differently than hearing students," Marschark said. "There's the assumption that if you remove the communication barriers in the classroom, that deaf students learn just like hearing students. But a lot of the research shows that's not true."

Three research associates will be employed as a result of the study, Marschark said.

"If you want to improve education for deaf students and hard-of-hearing students, you have to start before they get to college," said Alan Hurwitz, CEO of NTID and dean and vice president of RIT for NTID. "Understanding how information is processed and learned will better enable educators to provide the best possible strategies to have their students succeed."

The study comes after research showed deaf students generally lag behind their hearing peers in math courses. This study will determine how language fluency, cultural expectations and cognitive functions such as memory relate to learning mathematics. The information gained will be shared to help develop practices in deaf education.

"Many of us here at NTID are excited at the prospect of a research project of this magnitude related to mathematics," said Vince Daniele, professor and chairperson of the NTID Department of Science and Mathematics. "It is long overdue. Improving mathematics education, whether the students are deaf or hearing, is a critical undertaking in this age of technical opportunities."

More information can be obtained at the [CERP Web site](#).

Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

52 Lomb Memorial Drive | Rochester, NY 14623 | Office of Admissions: 585-475-6700 (voice/TTY)

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