

Appendix A: Communication Task Force Report

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEAN, NTID

For

Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Faculty Communication Skill Development

By

COMMUNICATION TASK FORCE

October 15, 1987 to May 15, 1989

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1st Revision
June 25, 1990

Approved by Faculty vote
February 1, 1991

2nd Revision
November 30, 1990

Italicized Revision (page 24)
October 29, 1991

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to the faculty, staff, and students who provided the historic impetus for establishing this Task Force, and those who shared their perspectives with us during the two years of deliberations, a number of individuals have provided invaluable technical assistance. A special note of appreciation is extended to the following:

Isabelle DiGioia
Nancy Fabrize
Pam Giles
Lavina Hept
Helen Lovato
Beth Perri
Jeanette Tydings

The CTF also wishes to recognize Jimmie Wilson. Jimmie served as a Faculty Council liaison to the CTF during its first year of deliberations.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

A. Dean's Charge

B. Preamble

SECTION IA

Office of the Dean
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Rochester Institute of Technology
October 15, 1987

THE NTID TASK FORCE ON COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS OF FACULTY

PREFACE:

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf continues to be committed to selecting and using the best elements of all communication systems to meet the educational and future employment needs of its students. The classroom environments at NTID usually have a broad mix of students with various skills in oral/aural communication, signed English, and ASL. While the present philosophy of eclecticism regarding communication skills will continue to be intrinsic to NTID's educational policies, it is clear that further elaboration is necessary in the areas of defining both the expectations of faculty for communication skills and the related procedures and documentation for assessing those expectations. The primary focus of this need is to develop clarity for the communication skills criterion in the promotion and tenure procedures. Another important focus is to continue NTID's commitment to maximizing communication among all deaf and hearing people within the academic, professional, and social environments of NTID.

To this end a task force is established.

CHARGE:

Clarifying Institute expectations of faculty and related documentation pertinent to the communication skills criteria of the promotion and tenure procedures (while "writing" is also an expectation of tenure and promotion, the specific focus of this task force will be the expressive and receptive communication skills used in one-to-one and group interactions as defined in the "charge", item 1 below)—make recommendations to the Dean by February 1, 1989. A progress report to the Dean is expected in May, 1988.

1. Develop and recommend statements of Institute expectations of faculty for communication skills. For this assignment "communication skills" refers to expressive and receptive skills used in one-to-one and group interactions (this may include, but is not limited to sign language, speaking, simultaneous communication, and receptive understanding). The Institute expectations of faculty should be in relation to:
 - a. academic, professional, and social situations
 - b. all primary areas of professional responsibility for faculty
 - 1.) teaching
 - 2.) research
 - 3.) counseling/advising
 - 4.) support service provision
 - 5.) academic administrative
 - 6.) clinical work

Furthermore, the recommended Institute expectations should be stated in terms of target levels within a range expressed over time.

2. Develop and recommend a reasonable plan and framework for implementing consistent assessment and documentation across the Institute (i.e. Institute approved procedures for documenting how one addresses the criterion for communication skills). Components of this plan may include:
 - a. student evaluations from classes
 - b. administrative/peer observations by qualified people

- c. performance evaluations from participating in sign communication classes
- d. validated assessment tools
- e. other

This framework will then be utilized in the various peer/administrative review processes to provide the basis of judgment for how well an individual meets the Institute expectations of faculty for communication skills.

NOTE: Depending on the specific expectations, appropriate NTID training efforts will have to be made available.

SECTION IB

PREAMBLE

Motivations/Precipitating Factors

The desired “ideal world” for NTID is one in which all faculty/staff would make a personal commitment and sincere continuing effort to develop and maintain a high level of sign language skills, as well as the oral skills necessary to interact effectively with people who are deaf. In this ideal world, all deaf and hearing people would be able to participate in a dynamic educational community to learn and exchange information, thus fostering the opportunity for full and equal participation by all members of the community. If such an ideal world existed at NTID, there would probably not be a need for a Communication Task Force. But also, the realities of the current world at NTID and the practical needs of the tenure and promotion processes have brought this NTID Communication Task Force into being to define and clarify the Institute expectations for faculty pertinent to communication skill.

Focus

In developing the recommendations for this report, the Communication Task Force (hereafter referred to as CTF) focused specifically on expressive/receptive communication skills needed for one-to-one and group interaction among students and faculty/staff. Purposeful effort was made to avoid confusing the issue of communication in this defined context with attitudes and teaching styles. The specific concern is whether an individual faculty member can effectively communicate and interact with students and faculty who are deaf at a level commensurate with a college environment. To cite a perspective expressed during student interviews, students continue to be frustrated with having to interact with faculty/staff who communicate using sign skills representative of elementary school levels in terms of vocabulary and expressive/receptive abilities. Because all students, faculty, and staff have a need to understand and be understood in this environment, NTID needs to provide clear Institutional expectations and support for this to occur.

Complexity is added to the issue of effective communication in the NTID environment by the ever present need to meet the diversity of communication skills in the student population. For example, in a typical entering class of freshman, about 30% have excellent sign language skills, about 50% have fair to good sign language skills, and the remaining 20% range from some to no sign language skills. Then we factor in the variations of hearing abilities and aided potential, along with speechreading and speaking abilities, the combinations of communication needs become even more complex. Recognizing the necessity to address the diverse communication needs of our students and to clarify expectations for communication skills, we have focused on developing, documenting, and assessing individual faculty members’ sign language fluency and oral communication strategies and techniques.

Continuing Commitment to English

Finally, it needs to be clear to everyone that in no way do the recommendations herein contradict or hinder the long-standing Institute commitment to facilitate development of English language competencies of NTID students. As per the NTID Guidance Paper Looking to the 1990’s (January, 1988), NTID is committed to initiating a variety of strategies to address the development of English language competencies across our entire curriculum (p.10). While English will always be a critical NTID focus, it needs to be emphasized without excluding other complementary communication/language options. It is the perspective of the members of this CTF that the facilitation of improved communication interaction between students and faculty (be it by sign language, oral strategies and techniques, or combination thereof) is not only critical to any learning environment, but crucial to the language development of students.

Section II

INVESTIGATION AND INQUIRY

LEADING TO

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Review of the Literature
- B. Review of Previous Communication Committee Reports
- C. Faculty and Student Perspectives

SECTION IIA

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is paucity of literature concerning assessment of adults' communication competence whether through sign, or speech, or both. Assessment in this area remains a multifaceted problem, as reflected in a Gallaudet College report (Johnson, 1983). It may be indicative of the complexity of the problem that the recommendations of that report are only now beginning to be considered at Gallaudet.

Throughout the Johnson (1983) report, numerous issues become apparent such as (a) the target behavior- language or communication, (b) the orientation toward testing- diagnostic (to focus on specific strengths and weakness) or proficiency (to indicate broad-based abilities), and (c) the criterion of performance - tested based or established independent of any test. In addition to these kinds of decisions, the Gallaudet College faculty was faced with a controversy over their philosophy of communication which became a primary concern among assessment issues.

Authors of an earlier document, called the Francis report (cited in Johnson, 1983), had tackled some of these issues, but were prepared to accept other, untested assumptions in order to move ahead with an assessment plan. Authors of the Johnston report were critical of any plan that did not handle the "big issues" first. There was disagreement on what issues were relevant to implementing communication assessment. The Johnson report appeared to be a reaction to both the recommendations of the previous report and the then-current system of communication assessment for Gallaudet faculty.

Faculty at Gallaudet had been evaluated via "traditional" procedures for their competence in "the simultaneous method" in use at that time (Gallaudet Faculty Handbook, 1986). An expressive test required faculty to use the simultaneous method in delivering a brief monologue and an assigned paragraph, to be judged satisfactory or not by a panel of four students and seven faculty. For the receptive test, they were to give a verbatim transcript of sentences and answer questions on a story or dialogue delivered by three students using the simultaneous method, part with voice.

Interview Assessment Techniques

Francis recommended the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) as a replacement for the panel of judges. The LPI evolved from the Oral Proficiency Interview, developed by the U.S. Foreign Service Institute. In the LPI, an interview is conducted by native users of the language who rate the individual on a functional scale for Low Novice to Superior to Superior. Guidelines for proficiency goals (the description of skills levels) in various modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) were written by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service (cited in Johnson, 1983) and workshops were held on oral proficiency interviewing and rating techniques in the early 1980's.

Johnson challenged the appropriateness of substituting the LPI, as defined by Francis, for the panel of judges. Because the LPI ratings were developed for an oral language, he questioned what the proficiency levels would mean for visual/gestural language. Does a native community of language users exist for simultaneous communication (SC)? Who would have the native intuitions necessary to judge use of SC on a LPI scale? Inconsistency in the use of SC was also seen as working against the validity of the LPI rating system.

The solution devised in the Johnson report was a modification of the LPI scale to fit a new assessment approach and communication philosophy. Johnson wanted a blend of diagnostic and proficiency orientations to testing. The goal was to reduce the punitive overtones of the test situation and lessen anxiety, while giving faculty a sense of control over their own skill development. To accomplish the latter, the evaluation procedure was accompanied by proposed courses to teach the required skills. It appears to have been accepted that the evaluation would specify language behaviors as opposed to communication behaviors. It was reasoned that the LPI scale deals explicitly with language

behaviors and that, since language is the basis of communication, assessment of language behaviors is one indication of communication competence.

The reference for the language behaviors was specified after a discussion of the many “language varieties” represented on the Gallaudet campus. In particular, the difficulties of signing and speaking simultaneously were reviewed. The authors also gave support to their views that face-to face communication should not have the purpose of teaching English, that English teaching is most successful as a separate activity, and that English teaching was not to be a consideration in determining the College’s philosophy of communication. The particular language variety of choice was described as a version of Fluent English Signing or Pidgin Signed English. In this variety, signing is based on an approximation of English syntax, with the inclusion of ASL features to reserve the integrity of the message, with limited use of English speech movements, and without focus on simultaneity of signs and voice. The simultaneous use of spoken English was neither desired nor encouraged.

The Gallaudet proposal. Three scales were developed by modifying the LPI rating system. A “global” scale, used for personnel decisions, rated the individual in terms of “function” (situations and tasks an individual could handle with a given level of skill), “content” (topics the person might be able to discuss), and “form” (details of production). The other two scales, receptive and expressive, were to be used for developing training goals.

The interview was to be conducted by two raters with lifelong signing experience, a tolerant attitude, and no connection with the Gallaudet training program. (Newell, 1989, has also cautioned against creating a conflict of interest by having the same individuals serve as evaluators and as trainers.) Levels of expected performance were stipulated for the end of the first and fourth years of employment, along with recommended consequences, including termination. A training program was specified for new and continuing faculty members to aid in achievement of the criteria. A minimum level of achievement (“Basic Plus”) was established for faculty with instructional or other one-to one- student contact.

The Sign Communication Proficiency Interview. Aspects of the recommendations from the Johnson report were echoed in a position paper issued by the NTID Sign Communication Department (SCD) (Aron & Cagle, 1988). The SCD faculty favored another modification of the LPI, called the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), which was developed at NTID. As described by Caccamise, Newell, Fennell, and Carr (1988), and Caccamise and Newell (1988), the SCPI is an interview technique. A videotape of a conversation with a skilled interviewer is later viewed by three trained raters. The topics of the interview vary according to the interests and communication needs of the interviewee. It incorporates natural conversational strategies and attempts to put interviewees at ease in order to allow them to demonstrate the best sample of their communication skills, both expressive and receptive.

The SCPI rating scale is adapted from the LPI and is based on an ideal native-like signer. It ranges from Zero (no functional skills) or Novice (single sign responses and very limited comprehension) to Superior-Plus (native-like signer). Two types of interview are available, one to assess American Sign Language (ASL) communication skills and a second to assess general sign communication skills. The latter includes evaluation of sign vocabulary; clarify, control, and fluency of sign production and fingerspelling; use of sign grammar; nonmanual signals (e.g., facial expressions); and flexibility along the English—ASL sign continuum.

SCPI interviewers are practiced in exploring the breadth and depth of interviewees’ expressive and receptive sign skills through their questioning. After estimating the probable highest level of performance, interviewers use probes to challenge interviewees to perform at an even higher level.

After interviewees are informed of the results, they are invited to discuss the results, with an emphasis on their strengths as well as suggestions for improving their skills.

Caccamise and his colleagues encouraged supplementing SCPI assessment with other approaches such as on-the-job observation. The SCD faculty also recommended a combination of assessment tools, such as SCPI with classroom observation and student evaluations. Recognition of the skills required for a given job assignment was apparent in both the SCPI literature and the SCD position paper. Caccamise and Newell (1988) detailed the proficiency standards - related to job function - that have been selected by seven programs nation-wide that use the SCPI. It was the position of the SCD faculty that NTID teachers achieve Advanced skills and that all other faculty and staff (non-teaching) achieve at least Intermediate skill level. Timelines were stipulated and benchmarks were established, from

Survival level at the end of the first year to Advanced by the end of the fourth year. The concept of minimum level and preferred (“proficiency”) level was suggested by Newell, Caccamise, Tebo, and McAdam (1988). These authors also provided data to demonstrate that a training program integrated with an assessment program can effect the gains necessary to attain required levels.

Importance of training. Training opportunities to aid learners in achieving the expected levels was stressed in both the SCPI literature and the SCD position paper. Newell and Holcomb (1989) have compiled a list of learning resources available to NTID faculty that include classroom instruction as well as examples of informal learning opportunities, such as advising student organizations. It is the opinion of Aron (1988), however that provision of learning opportunities may not be adequate to ensure skill development. It has been her experience that faculty are not consistent in their attendance after enrolling in formal courses at NTID. The SCD position paper suggests a monitoring system to include chairpersons who will mentor faculty in their fulfillment of an individual communication and deafness training plan.

Definition of Expectations

A clear definition of exactly what is expected of a faculty member was emphasized in the Johnson report, the SCPI literature, and the SCD position paper. Memos from Parasnis (1987) and Caccamise (1987) indicated that a lack of clarity has been a source of difficulties in NTID promotion reviews in the past. As stated in the Parasnis memo, the practices of the SCD during their training activities became a de facto policy to many faculty in the absence of written Institute expectations. That is, they may have assumed that the model for classroom communication was represented in the techniques used for training faculty is sign communication. Similarly, Subtelny (1986) noted that specific SCD course offering might shape both attitudes and skills of students and faculty. All of this points to the need for a written statement, from the time of initial hire, that describes required skills - both the area of skill attainment (e.g., sign communication) and the level of attainment - and how those skills are to be documented. These understandings should be shared by those who review faculty attainment and those who are under review.

Alternatives to the Interview Technique

Written policy statements cannot stand alone, of course, and must be followed by procedures for implementation; that is: How is one’s skill to be assessed? So far, this review has considered only tools based on the LPI and focused on sign skill evaluation, a search of the literature yielded but a single resource that dealt with adult learners. Seal (1986) presented an observation scale for documenting use of total communication by students-in-training at the college level. She identified 10 behaviors, each to be rated for frequency of occurrence on a scale from never to always. Some behaviors were broadly defined (e.g., “actively works to improve both receptive and expressive communication skills”); others were more narrow in scope (e.g., fingerspells in a fluent and precise manner”). A self-evaluation was recommended in addition to that of two other evaluators. Length and setting of the observation were to be selected as appropriate. Videotaping for later rating was an option. The authors reported only informal use of the scale to date. Given the informal nature of the scale and the unevenness of the rating items, it does not appear to apply to the assessment needs of NTID faculty.

Other authors have addressed assessment of sign communication by children. None of schemes appear to have been systematized to the extent needed for application to NTID. Also, the behaviors are, appropriately, developmental and would not suffice beyond the survival level of skill development for college-level communication. For example, step 32 out of the 50 listed in Brown and Orvets’ (1987) Behavioral Characteristics Progression for sign language is: “Produces signs for 20 action verbs without a model.” Brown and Orvets also include a pragmatics checklist. This may be useful to indicate the scope of intents that the signer can control (e.g., “requesting an object”, “protesting” or “analyzing and hypothesizing”). Further work would be needed, however, to add guidelines for determining how each intent was expressed.

Pragmatics was the topic also of Luetke-Stahlman (1987). She went further, however, and recommended evaluation of form and content, as well as use. Borrowing from researchers in oral language acquisition, she compiled pragmatic skills taxonomy and a list of milestones of pragmatic development through the fifth year of life. She also

devised an adapted semantic taxonomy. Both are to be used in analysis of transcriptions of language samples. She gave an example of bimodal transcription which indicates which part of the message was voiced, which was signed, the number of units used in each mode, the content (semantics) of the message, and its purpose (pragmatics). Application to adults is, again, questionable.

Another approach to the study of communication involving children in interactional analysis (Craig & Collins, 1970; Wolf, 1977). This too, focuses on uses of language rather than degree of skill in expressing each use. A serious objection of interactional analysis is the tedious nature of this type of observation and the tendency to draw conclusions related to instructional style. One usually uses interactional analysis to determine relative frequencies of “teacher talk” and “student talk”. There is an implication that classroom learning is facilitated by more of the latter and less of the former.

In a college environment, prescriptions for interaction, or even statements of preferred style, are probably inappropriate. Nevertheless, for professional development, interested faculty may want to pursue a scheme such as the developed by Craig and Collins (1970) which includes observation of mode of expression as well as intent. For example, H. Lang (Office of Faculty Development, 1989) has proposed a series of seminars and mentoring activities for new faculty, to be organized by the NTID Office of Professional Development, that include analysis of what happens in the classroom. Communication skill training is also part of the proposal and could be the focus of some of the classroom observations. The goal remains skill development, and not assessment, however.

In the area of oral communication, assessment techniques might be borrowed from oral interpreter training. Northcott (1984) discusses this topic in general. Castle (1984) has developed lists of techniques to enhance the oral message, but assessment procedures remain informal (via observation and judgment).

Study of the Nature of Communication Behaviors

It has been suggested (see the Francis report cited in Johnson, 1983) that a first step in instituting assessment is to study what happens when people communicate in relevant situations (those that are seen to be significant for evaluation). Johnson (1983) recommended conducting such a study in parallel with ongoing assessment of faculty skills, evidence perhaps of his confidence in the definition of the criterion behaviors. At NTID, a study similar to the suggested by both Francis and Johnson has been underway by D. Castle and her associates for several years.

The focus of the first NTID communication study by Castle and Pocobello (1987) described how 13 instructors used SC and its oral/aural components in the classroom. Comment was made by the investigators on aspects they identified as important: the oral/aural characteristics of articulatory movement, voice level and quality, speech rate and flow, gestures and expression, supportive written information, amount of English spoken, and location of hands when signing; and the visual/gestural characteristics of sign and fingerspelling production, sign vocabulary, facial expression and body language, grammatical structure through sign, speech/voice/lip movement, code switching, omissions, clarification and support techniques, and level of discourse. The results indicated deficiencies in both the oral/aural and sign components of the teachers’ delivery for which the authors recommended specific curriculum offerings.

In a second stage of the study of SC, Stinson, Newell, Castle, Mallery-Ruganis, and Holcomb (1989) sought the opinions of 36 knowledgeable consumers. They arrived at a list of about 400 descriptors of effective SC through group discussion, followed by observation of brief segments of SC performed by three experienced signers. These were organized into 41 categories. Each of the 36 respondents then identified the three most important characteristics of SC, resulting in a table of summed rank scores for each category of comment.

Stinson et al. considered their respondents’ ranking to be one way of summarizing the priorities and concerns of these consumers. The most highly ranked items, in order of importance, were clear lip movement, facial expression, body language/movement, grammatical features of the visual/gestural modality, sign production, sign choice and pace. According to the authors, their results verified (a) the biomodal nature of SC and (b) the complexity of the process. Among the work remaining is validation of the effectiveness of communicators who exhibit clarity in each of the highly ranked areas.

Whereas Stinson et al. consulted adults employed in academia to define effective communication, Foster, Barefoot, and DeCaro (1988) consulted first-year NTID students. Again, the complexity of the topic emerged as a primary finding. Foster et al. conducted 23 open-ended interviews. The students' comments were then analyzed and inferences were made about the defining components of communication (called "dimensions").

To many of the students interviewed by Foster et al., communication meant "talking " in generic sense; that is, some form of language encoded in some modality. To this first psychophysical dimension were added an overlapping affective dimension (e.g. self-confidence, interest, prejudice/tolerance), situational variables (Who was participating? About what? Where? How? And why?), and social political considerations (identity with a particular "world").

Foster et al. concluded that the meaning of communication is multifaceted and interaction of at least these four dimensions. Assessment and intervention, they continued, cannot focus exclusively on acquisition of technical skills. They must build on the everyday life experiences of the learner which may help to explain the learner's response to intervention. They should include the learner and the teacher in a dialogue and in activities of self discovery for both individuals concerning their perspectives on communication. Aspects of these conclusions were mentioned also by Park (1980) in connection with potential explanations for the difficulties experienced second language learners.

The Psychology Change

Clearly, assessment of communication skill entails an emotional response from all parties involved. This is evident, for example, in the memo of Lang (1989) to whom these are human rights issues. Cagle's memo (1987) also indicates that these are issues of accessibility and mutual respect which must be recognized. On the other hand, we have noted the critical need to enlist the aid and support of those who are the subject of any proposal for communication skill development. Listening, clarifying, negotiating and validating are all essential for achieving changeability (Lippitt & Lippitt, 1978)

SECTION IIB

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION REPORTS

In addition to reviewing relevant literature as an aid in addressing the Dean's charge, the CTF also sought an historical perspective on the issue of communication at NTID. To do this, the CTF reviewed three reports by previous communication task forces:

1. Recommendation of the NTID Communication Task Force, March 20, 1980
2. DCO Communication Task Force Report to Division of Career Opportunities, April 1982
3. Division of Career Opportunities Communication Task Force Recommendation, 1986

The three reports focused on the importance of having consistent, high quality communication among deaf and hearing faculty, staff, and students. Each report identified areas of concern where improved communication appeared necessary.

The recommendations of the 1980 Communication Task Force went beyond identifying areas of concern based on their charge "... to develop a plan to increase the sensitivity of NTID staff to the diverse communication needs of hearing and hearing-impaired staff members" (p.1). The 1980 Communication Task Force recognized the "...lack of consistency in the use of adequate communication skills and behaviors to facilitate communication between hearing and hearing-impaired staff members" (p.2). As a result, they identified five target audiences and related outcomes for each. The five NTID audiences were NTID Administration; New Staff; Veteran Staff; Hearing-Impaired Staff; and Staff with Limited Hearing/Hearing-Impaired Contact. Listed below is a brief summary of expected outcomes for each of the five NTID audiences:

<u>Audience</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
1. Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model for effective communication behaviors.b. Demonstrates appropriate communication behaviors to effectively conduct meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired staff.c. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.
2. New Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Demonstrate sufficient comfort level to interact with hearing and hearing-impaired staff within the limits of newly acquired communication skills.b. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.c. Accept responsibility for acquiring a variety of communication skills.

3. Veteran Staff

- a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model of effective communication behaviors.
- b. Demonstrate appropriate communication behaviors to effectively participate in meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired staff.
- c. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

4. Hearing-Impaired Staff

- a. Demonstrate awareness and accept responsibility for being a role model of effective communication behaviors.
- b. Demonstrate sufficient comfort to identify communication needs to others and suggest ways for others to meet those needs.
- c. Have awareness of own communication capabilities.
- d. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.

5. Staff with Limited Hearing / Hearing-Impaired Contact

- a. Demonstrate sufficient comfort level to interact with hearing and hearing-impaired staff within the limits of communications skills.
- b. Have knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors necessary to communicate effectively with hearing and hearing-impaired staff.
- c. Accept responsibility for acquiring a variety of communication skills.

The recommended strategies for supporting these outcomes included: managing for motivation; simulation activity; panel discussions on communication problems among hearing and hearing-impaired staff; cross-cultural training; role model training; effective communication techniques; change agent Communication Task Force expected to sensitize individuals throughout the NTID environment and achieve the following:

1. In large group meeting involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, all NTID faculty/staff in attendance will take appropriate steps to facilitate communication. (For example, sit so that hearing-impaired participants can see others with minimum interference; make certain that hearing-impaired participants are watching before speaking; use audio/visual aids effectively.)
2. In all meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, NTID faculty/staff will practice the communication skills necessary for each individual in the meeting to follow the discussion or presentation. (For example, use simultaneous communication; enunciate words clearly and naturally, face the audience when speaking).

3. In meetings involving hearing and hearing-impaired individuals, the staff members conducting the meetings will take primary responsibility for choosing and preparing setting that facilitate communication, and will serve continuously to facilitate and encourage effective communication in the meeting.
4. In one-to-one interactions between hearing and hearing-impaired staff members, each individual will employ strategies to ensure that their own communication needs are met and that the needs of the other individual are satisfied.

The 1982 DCO recommendations re-affirmed the concerns raised in the earlier report by focusing on: telephone use, interpreting, meetings, informal informational network, social functions, and other.

Summary

Clearly, the areas of concern identified by all previous NTID Communication Task Forces remain pertinent today. Despite efforts by previous task forces to resolve long-standing issues related to communication at NTID, many problems continue to exist. The complexity of the issues and the strong feelings which emerge when discussing issues of communication have influenced how much change the Institute has actually undergone in this regard. In addition, none of the previous efforts provide guidance for the establishment of NTID expectations for sign language skill levels, the development of oral communication strategies and techniques, and related assessment procedures. The value of the recommendations and reports of previous efforts is that they document the long-standing need for improved communication among deaf and hearing people within the NTID environment.

SECTION IIC

FACULTY AND SUPPORT PERSPECTIVES

Because the Institute's past experience with investigating issues of communication and implementing change have often been seen as administrative needs and because many questions have recently emerged regarding communication in the tenure and promotion processes, the CTF was committed to involving the entire academic community in its deliberations prior to writing the first draft of its recommendations. Throughout the two years 1987-1989, selected faculty, administrators, students, and professional staff were invited to meet with the Task Force to share perspectives. Open forums were held to discuss the issues with the Task Force. From these conversations, the following themes emerged. For full compilation of views expressed to the Task Force, see the Appendix

1. Source of the problem

Administration, rather than faculty, is an underlying source of the problem of inadequate communication skills throughout the Institute. There has been a lack of guidance in the form of (a) policy ("requirements") as well as (b) modeling of effective communication by administrators themselves.

Decentralization of faculty development activities has been a contributing factor. When left up to individual faculty members, plans to focus on communication skills often receive little or no administrative support and are "forgotten" in favor of other, more closely monitored or tangibly rewarded activities.

2. Clarity, consistency, & effectiveness

Expectations for faculty should be stated in a policy that is clear, consistent, and effective. Faculty should be able to understand clearly from the policy exactly what is expected of them. The policy should be applied consistently across schools and divisions. The policy should effectively motivate all faculty to achieve by being realistic in its expectations and even-handed in its application to all faculty (whether or not they are tenured). It will be effective if it facilitates decision-making by tenure and promotion committees.

3. Definition

It is difficult to define communication. There are also wide-ranging and opposing opinions as to the bounds that should be imposed for the purposes of policy.

To some, communication cannot be separated from the purpose or setting in which it occurs (e.g., instruction). Communication is a transmission of ideas, not a demonstration of technique through a particular modality. One must evaluate achievement of the ends (Did the student understand?) rather than means (Did the instructor use the correct handshape?). Communication is one's adaptability to the audience and the context, and requires a right attitude. It would allow for compensation of weak skills by use of other skills. It is not consistent with an evaluation of how accurately one sends or receives ASL.

To others, what we are really talking about is the ability to sign. Sign communication should be our sole concern.

4. Level of expectation

In an ideal setting, the policy would result in all faculty being able to reach all students, both expressively and receptively. However, the concept of having a uniform, required level of competence

is not universally accepted. Though the ideal is to achieve excellence, the concept of a minimum level of competence has some advantages. It might also sponsor mediocrity and fail to encourage ongoing learning. Faculty do not want their communication to be prescribed by policy, yet do require that the policy be explicit about what is expected.

5. Documenting competence

There are potential dangers in using “tests”. Tests represent a threatening situation to some faculty. The evaluation process must be positive. A process orientation may be useful. Pretenure review might help keep faculty on track and provide relevant and timely feedback in a positive manner.

Testing must be conducted in a content that is relevant to the goals of the evaluation (such as successful communication in the classroom). Tests are not real situations. However, tests can be useful in isolating and thereby measuring observable behaviors.

There must be alternatives offered for documenting competence; determination should not rest on a single test result. The policy should be flexible enough to respect individual differences among faculty. Evaluation might include a mix of formal and informal means. Specifically, the appropriateness of the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) for this purpose has been both supported and seriously questioned.

6. Selecting the evaluators

Chairpersons are inappropriate in this role. Peer review might be considered, but would require adequate training and must be focused. Confidentiality is a critical issue in peer review.

Evaluation by students is subject to interpretation. Students may or may not be “the experts”. Students often focus on irrelevant factors in their evaluations. If student input is used, there must be careful preparation of materials and training of students in their use.

7. Role of motivation

Motivation to develop competence is a critical factor. The policy might consider both internal and external motivators, though the effectiveness of external motivators is unclear. Communication competence should be respected and, therefore, shown to be worth something tangible. Motivation is increased when a policy is reasonable in its expectations. Faculty need time - within limits - to develop their competence. Job-function is a factor which might be considered. It is important to provide motivation to involve veteran faculty in ongoing learning.

SECTION III

**ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES
UNDERLYING THE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

SECTION III

ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Each member of the Task Force brought varying perspectives to its charge and different approaches and strategies for addressing the identified problem. As we delved into the intent of the charge and as we talked with faculty, students, and administrators, certain working premises began to take shape. Not surprisingly, these premises continued to be reformulated as the Task Force went about its investigation and as we clarified our own thinking about this complex issue. What resulted from our discussion was consensus on certain basic principles and assumptions that guided our thinking as we framed out recommendations. A general fundamental principle was that communication skill development goals will continue toward the academic, career, and personal-social success of NTID students as indicated in the Institute Mission Statement. Below is a description of the specific guiding principles that formed the basis of our work.

1. The recommended learning and assessment experiences will be designed to be an important part of a positive academic process.

The Communication Task Force recognizes that language learning, particularly second language learning, happens best when done in a positive, supportive and nurturing environment. It also recognizes that attitudes toward learning a language and being members of a bicultural situation are important to the success of language development. Positive attitudes are developed, not because they are imposed on people, but because people have intrinsic reasons to develop them. The recommendations and guidelines of this Task Force are not intended as substitutes for individual faculty motivation, but as stimulants that will prompt all members of the Institute to achieve greater communication ability. They are also expected to clarify the communication needs that must be met to consider NTID a healthy language community.

NTID should have, as its basic premise, the objective of helping all individuals become more integrated members of its language community. In order to provide this help, the Institute needs to convey the message that the recommendations of this Task Force are not based on a punitive approach, nor are they restricted to evaluation measures. Rather, the recommendations and the spirit and intent supporting the recommendations are based on the notion that building and maintaining a language community requires the facilitating of each person's developing through both learning and evaluation experiences. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

- a. The Institute will demonstrate that it considers the faculty's success with communication to be an integral part of academic achievement.
 - b. The desired communication learning and assessment experiences will be an ongoing process for all faculty.
 - c. The learning and assessment process will be based on an academic approach that rewards faculty for the acquisition and maintenance of communication skill. The Institute will encourage in the most positive manner possible, the skill development of faculty and the appreciation of the diverse situational, cultural, and affective aspects of communication and deafness.
 - d. Involvement in learning activities related to communication skill development will be given priority attention by the Institute so as to maximize opportunities for maintaining a positive attitude and adequate energies for communication skill development.
2. **Communication expectations will be realistic for faculty.**

The Communication Task Force recognizes the challenge that learning a second language poses for adults, both deaf and hearing. The Institute must address any expectations for communication skill development in a realistic way. Becoming fluent is a life-long endeavor, yet we can set up guidelines that will help

faculty achieve levels that will address the needs of NTID students, faculty and staff to understand and be understood as they communicate in a variety of communication situations. We can foster an attitude that developing competence will be an ongoing activity for all faculty regardless of tenure status or rank. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

- a. Communication skill development goals will assure equal opportunity for hearing and deaf NTID faculty and staff to function without communication barriers.
- b. The Institute will not expect types or levels of communication competence that are inconsistent with current knowledge regarding the communication learning potential of deaf and hearing adults.
- c. Communication training within the Institute will reflect the current knowledge of adult language teaching methodologies, learning styles and rates, and other influencing factors.
- d. Expectations for communication skill development will be defined in terms of behaviors that can be observed and evaluated, whether formally or informally.
- e. Expectations will also be accompanied by clearly stated and realistic timelines for achievement.

3. The term “communication” will have a focused meaning.

The term “communication” has been defined in many ways. In its most general sense, communication is a part of the entire list of professional expectations for promotion and tenure. In order to establish expectations for communication that can be considered separately from the many other activities that involve communication, this Task Force has found it necessary to describe communication with a focused meaning. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

- a. For the purposes of establishing expectations for communication skill development, the meaning of “communication” will be restricted to expressive and receptive face-to-face communication performance applicable to one-to-one and group situations experienced by NTID faculty.
- b. Accountability for the communication skills required in teaching, research, and other professional activities will not be included in the recommendations. However, it would be expected that as faculty members develop sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques, they would also learn ways to apply them to the full scope of their activities.
- c. Although achieving sign language proficiency is a complex task, a specific level of sign language skill is to be achieved by all faculty, and the description of this expectation is to be specified for at least tenure and promotion. This level, although realistic, must be higher than just a minimum level of proficiency.
- d. Oral aspects of expressive and receptive communication will be included as an important component of the expectations. Evidence of learning will be expected in documentation, but levels of expected achievement will not be specified.

4. The Institute will provide a systematic support process for the communication skill development of its faculty.

Although historically the Institute has provided support for developing sign language and other communication skills, specific expectations have never been consistently defined or implemented. There needs to be a formal Institute policy that states that ample and appropriate communication learning opportunities will be provided to faculty on a regular basis in order to achieve and maintain slated expectations for achievement. To this end, the following assumptions and principles are noted:

- a. There will be formal Institute support for the provision of ample and appropriate communication learning opportunities within the Institute.
- b. Communication learning opportunities will be provided without incurring excessive workload and without conflicting with other professional expectations.
- c. Current NTID faculty development programs and approaches initially will be the foundation of the communication support process. In its ongoing review process, the Institute will rely heavily on the recommendations of faculty in determining the most successful and attractive learning programs.
- d. The Institute will aid individual faculty in their communication skill development goals, plans, activities, and involvement by providing support through department chairpersons, Assistant/Associate Deans, and the Dean of NTID.
- e. The Institute will provide a uniform framework to guide faculty in documenting communication skill development.
- f. Documentation of communication achievements for faculty members will include a combination of a specified assessment tool required of all faculty and other faculty-selected methods for documenting achievement.

5. Student views will be given appropriate consideration in the implementation of the guidelines for faculty communication skill development.

The Communication Task Force included student members and also obtained student input in other forums. As the guidelines for faculty communication skill development are implemented, it is expected that the Institute will continue to solicit student views.

SECTION IV

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTE EXPECTATIONS

- A. Institute Expectations and Guidelines
- B. Rationale for Recommendations
- C. Interpreting the Intent and Spirit of the Recommendations

SECTION IVA

INSTITUTE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY COMMUNICATION SKILL DEVELOPMENT

To foster the opportunity for full and equal participation by all members of the NTID community, NTID faculty are required to develop:

A. Sign language skills (expressive and receptive)

The Institute expectation for NTID faculty is that they will strive for, achieve, and maintain the ability to communicate in sign language at a level of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, comprehension, and fluency that allows faculty to participate effectively in communication situations applicable to work and social topics.

There are two acceptable categories of signers: (1) those who sign fluently in an English-like word order with or without voice, and (2) those who sign fluently in ASL. Signers who use an English-like word order are able to incorporate signing space, directionality, and other features which are characteristics of ASL vocabulary and its principles. The expected level also indicates strong sign reception abilities.

The rationale for sign communication recommendations is described in Section IVB.1. The intent and spirit of these recommendations are described in Section IVC.1.

B. Oral communication strategies and techniques

The institute expectation for NTID faculty is that they will strive for, achieve, and maintain the ability to use oral communication strategies and techniques. Oral communication is considered to be speech, with or without voice, used expressively and / or receptively, alone or to complement a message communicated with signs.

Although no skill level is specified for oral communication, faculty are expected to participate in learning activities whereby they may develop a knowledge of specific oral communication strategies and techniques and their ability in communication situations.

A description of some of these strategies and techniques and the rationale for including them among faculty expectations are described in Section IVB.2. The intent and spirit of the oral component of the recommendations are described in Section IVC.2.

In consideration of the needs of the academic and social environment of NTID/RIT, the target goal for all communicators is an advanced level of knowledge and abilities. In recommending this level, we establish the concept of a “mark to shoot at” which reflects the same spirit of lifelong learning that we hope for in our students. At the same time, the CTF realizes that there are practical matters in translating this ideal into a reality (see “Interpreting the Intent and Spirit of the Recommendations”); therefore, the guidelines specify a reasonable level of expected skill achievement as well as require that faculty demonstrate progress toward the target goal of an advanced level of communication skill (see especially p. 30-31).

Faculty expectations for both the sign and oral components related only to the acquisition of communication knowledge and abilities; there are no requirements for what communication mode(s) a faculty member must use in any given professional circumstance.

Stages, expectations, and documentation

While it is impossible to provide a “magic formula” for guaranteeing the attainment of communication skills, experience has shown that regular participation in a variety of learning activities and ongoing interaction will greatly enhance communication skill development. In light of the distinction we have made above between expectations and the target goal, individual faculty members are responsible for developing documentation to show good faith efforts in the following:

- a. participation in learning activities and efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues, and
- b. development of communication skill.

Recognizing that faculty move through different stages in their communication skill development, the expectations described below are seen as ongoing in nature. They are provided to give faculty a sense of forward movement in communication knowledge and performance from their pre-tenure period continuing through to the attainment of highest academic rank. Expectations and documentation to be prepared at each stage are outlined on the following pages.

STAGE

EXPECTATION

DOCUMENTATION

Pre-tenure
Leading to
Tenure Review

1. Participation in learning learning activities/efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal appraisal process:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics
2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and / or individual)
3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people
4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

2. Development of skill in sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques
2. student evaluation/feedback
3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)
4. certification from RID, NAD, or other certification related to sign language or oral communication strategies and techniques
5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

By Tenure

3. Achievement of Intermediate Plus level or higher sign language skill

In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in tenure documentation

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

STAGE

EXPECTATION

DOCUMENTATION

Post-Tenure

1. Ongoing participation in Learning activities / efforts to maintain and improve communication skills and sensitivity to Deaf cultural issues

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics
2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual)
3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people
4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

2. Development of skill in sign language (to the advanced level or higher) and development of oral communication strategies and techniques

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques
2. student evaluation / feedback
3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)
4. certification from RID, NAD or other certification related to sign language or techniques
5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

STAGE

EXPECTATION

DOCUMENTATION

Promotion Review Time
Promotion to
Assistant Professor

1. Participation in learning activities / efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to Deaf cultural issues

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics
2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual)
3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people
4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

2. Development of skill in sign language (to the advanced level or higher) and development of oral communication strategies and techniques

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques
2. student evaluation / feedback
3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)
4. certification from RID, NAD or other certification related to sign language or techniques
5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

3. Achievement of Intermediate Plus level or higher sign language skill

In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in promotion documentation:

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

STAGE

EXPECTATION

DOCUMENTATION

Promotion Review Time
Promotion to
Associate Professor
Or Professor

1. Persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process to show efforts toward improvement since last promotion:

1. evidence of satisfactory completion of courses and seminars completed related to sign language, oral communication, cultural aspects, sensitivity, history, or similar topics
2. description of progress in courses and seminars (prepared by instructors and/or individual)
3. evidence of ongoing participation in activities involving deaf people
4. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

2. Development of skill in sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques

One or more of the following is expected to be included regularly in the annual appraisal process:

1. observations by individuals qualified to assess sign language and oral communication strategies and techniques
2. student evaluation / feedback
3. Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)
4. certification from RID, NAD or other certification related to sign language or techniques
5. other (as determined by individual faculty member)

3. Achievement of Advanced level or higher sign language skill documentation

In addition to the above, it is required that the following also be included in promotion

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) rating (General or ASL)

SECTION IVB

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expectations related to sign language

The learning of sign language by NTID faculty, as with any language development, can be expected to occur in a variety of communication settings and may involve many different types of interactions. Recognizing the potential value of such diversity, sign language expectations for faculty are designed to promote involvement in a broad range of learning efforts. No single activity or method of sign language learning is prescribed in the expectations, although options are listed in the descriptions of suggested documentation.

Expectations for participation in learning activities are accompanied by an accountability for development of skill / achievement in sign language. Faculty are encouraged to document their sign language development using whatever means they choose that will best represent their abilities in as many types of communication situations as desired. For documenting achievement of the expected levels of sign language skill in one-to-one conversations involving familiar work and social topics, the SCPI is required at two academic stages: during review for tenure and during review for promotion to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

The following reasons provide the basis for recommending the advanced level as the Institute target for all tenure-track faculty to strive for, achieve, and maintain:

- A recurring theme which emerged from faculty and student interviews was the need to establish a high (yet attainable) standard for communication using sign language. Competence beyond a minimum level was deemed not only desirable, but necessary, if we wished to provide deaf students with the best learning environment possible. This notion was also strongly expressed by deaf faculty who reminded us of their need for full participation in this academic community.
- The CTF is aware of the many controversial and complex issues related to achieving and maintaining the target goal of an advanced level of sign language skill. Some of these issues related to having one expectation level across different job functions, the amount of contact faculty have with students or other faculty, and so on. However, it was the collective judgment of the CTF that the needs of deaf students and deaf faculty take precedence and that one set of consistent expectations with guidelines for all tenure-track faculty be established. The CTF does not want to send the message that communication is more important for one job than another. Because skill level is related, in part, to the frequency of opportunity to use those skills, some faculty may need to design creative ways to get practice and continue their skill development. The CTF is recommending that there must be sufficient resources and mechanism available to aid those faculty whose jobs do not put them in daily contact with deaf students, faculty, or staff. Recognizing the possibility of “extreme” exceptions to the guidelines, it is our recommendation that exceptionality be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Given this target for achievement, the following rationale provides the basis for recommending the SCPI as part of the assessment procedure:

- The Dean’s charge to the CTF was to recommend a plan and framework for implementing consistent assessment and documentation across the Institute. In addition, numerous interviews with faculty supported this need to establish and implement a systematic, fair, and consistent process. The implications of this charge and input are that:
 - An evaluation procedure be selected that could be consistently and fairly applied to all faculty on an Institute-wide basis;
 - A target level of skill attainment be identified on which the judgment of peer and administrators could be based pertinent to the tenure review and promotion processes of an individual.

- In the review of the literature on sign language evaluation instruments, the Communication Task Force was able to identify the SCPI as an appropriate instrument for assessing sign language skills in one-to-one conversations. The CTF also recognized that the SCPI is currently the only procedure used extensively in a variety of educational and work situations to assess the sign language skills of adults.
- Many concerns have been raised by faculty about the limitations of the SCPI or of any instrument that tries to assess the complex nature of communicative competency in sign. Questions of sign performance variability which results from differences in situation and context, topic, audience, status, power, and so on were raised and discussed. The CTF's decision to recommend the SCPI does not mean that these concerns and questions were not seriously considered. Rather, we realized that the selection of this assessment instrument had to be made in conjunction with a very clear research and evaluation component (see "Evaluation and Research Considerations") so that these issues could be investigated on a long-term basis. Nonetheless, the confidence of the designers of the instrument as well as the experience of using the SCPI to date at NTID led us to adopt this tool to achieve the expressed need of fair, consistent, and systematic assessment measures.

The specific SCPI ratings selected by the CTF (Intermediate Plus for tenure review and promotion to Assistant Professor, and Advanced for promotion to senior ranks and as an expectation for all tenured faculty) were determined because of concerns about timelines for achievement of communication goals. This is particularly important for new faculty as they prepare their professional development plans and equally important for already tenured faculty seeking promotion. The CTF recommends formally established timelines so that (a) faculty are aware of what exactly is expected of them at tenure and promotion, and (b) all deaf and hearing people at NTID can have access to effective interaction.

The following rationale provides the basis for the recommended levels on the SCPI:

- *There are many factors that contribute to successful second language learning, including amount of contact with users of the language, attitudes toward learning another language, attitudes toward the "other" culture, and time on task. The CTF carefully considered these factors, data collected from programs using the SCPI, and the experiences of NTID sign communication faculty, all of which indicate that four-to-five years of continuous, sustained learning activities and regular daily contact with deaf students is sufficient to enable the average adult sign language learner to achieve the Advanced rating of the SCPI.¹ Videotapes of SCPIs reviewed by the CTF also supported having an overall target goal of advanced sign language communication skills. The SCPI Advanced rating, therefore, appears to be consistent with one of the principals adopted by the CTF; that is, the communication expectations will be realistic to achieve (Section III). At the same time the CTF realizes there are some unanswered questions regarding the reasonableness of requiring an Advanced rating on the SCPI by tenure review. For this reason we have established the initial expectation of Intermediate Plus for tenure, and we have recommended a research and evaluation plan to be conducted over a five year period to answer some of the unanswered questions.*

¹Italicized text represents a final revision unanimously recommended by the Communication Task Force (October 9, 1991) and approved by the Dean. The change is this paragraph of the CTF Report (2nd Revision, November 1990) was made to avoid a potentially misleading statement relative to the length of time it takes the average adult learner to achieve the Advanced rating on the SCPI. The text stated that an "Intermediate Plus rating on SCPI" is achievable within four to five years as noted; this should have read "Advanced rating on SCPI" is achievable within the same time period.

- While the achievement of an Intermediate Plus rating on the SCPI within the timelines for tenure review is seen by the CTF to be a realistic expectation, it is not considered to be an ultimate goal. The CTF is also interested in seeing that all academic faculty, including those already tenured and promoted, have sign language as an area of ongoing study. Development of communication skills is an ongoing process. This idea underlies the recommendation of an advanced level target for all faculty. The expectation is that all faculty will participate in ongoing learning activities which promote the development of communication skills. In both the Assumptions and Principles (Section III) and in the Recommendations for Institute Expectations (Section IVA), the CTF emphasized two needs: (1) sustained and continuous study and involvement in learning activities throughout all the stages of our professional lives, and (2) targeting specific levels of sign language skills at the different stages.
- The CTF recognizes that most NTID faculty are native users of English and that their signing will most likely follow English-like word order. The recommendations for sign language achievement are not meant to negate this reality. There are two types of SCPI assessment: General and ASL. Some faculty may elect to be assessed for their ASL features and will take the General version of the SCPI. Acceptance of this type of signing is based on the assumption that those NTID students who are fluent in ASL will generally be able to adapt to an English-like word order if accompanied by ASL features. The expected levels can be achieved on either version of the SCPI. A description of all the SCPI ratings appears on the following page.

SIGN COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SCPI) RATING SCALE

RATINGS

FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTORS

Superior Plus	Able to use signing fluently and accurately to discuss in depth a variety of social and work topics. All aspects of signing are native-like, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, grammar, colloquialisms, accent/production, and cultural references.
Superior	Able to use sign vocabulary and grammar with native-like fluency and accuracy for all formal and informal social and work needs. Comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar are excellent.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .

Advanced	Able to sign with sufficient grammatical accuracy* and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations to social and work topics. Conversation is generally fluent and shared. Comprehension is good, vocabulary is broad, grammar is good, and spontaneously elaborates on familiar topics when appropriate. Able to respond appropriately to unfamiliar topics.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .

Intermediate	Able to satisfy with some confidence routine social demands and work requirements. Demonstrates use of some sign grammatical features in connected discourse. Able to narrate and describe topics related to background, family, interests/hobbies, and work. Although some hesitations, fair to good control of everyday sign vocabulary is evident.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
Survival	Able to satisfy basic survival needs in social and/or work situations. Can ask and answer basic questions and has some skills in creating sign utterances based on learned / memorized sign vocabulary. Can get into, through, and out of simple survival situations.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
Novice	Basically limited to single sign utterances with vocabulary primarily related to every day social, question/topic areas such as names of family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names or weekdays, and time.
0	No functional skills in signing.

*Grammatical accuracy as defined by the SCPI does not mean the word order of a specific language, ASL or English. "Grammatical" elements important to sign communication include: use of space for objects / persons present and not present, use of directionality and pronoun incorporation with verbs, inflection of sign movements to include "adjective and adverb" information, number incorporation, use of the "time-line," use of movement and space for singular versus plural, use of appropriate non-manual features such as facial expression and body shifts, and use of classifiers.

2. Expectations related to oral communication

In its deliberation of the types of communication that should be included in its “Institute Expectations and Guidelines,” the Communication Task Force recognized that oral strategies and techniques are critical to effective communication for many of our faculty, staff, and students who are deaf. This in no way reduces the importance of problems in the area of sign language, but in soliciting input from NTID students and faculty, the CTF learned that many of the faculty, including deaf members, felt a need to respond to the communication needs of those who express and receive information best when there is an oral component to the communication. It is this need that became the impetus for including oral communication strategies and techniques as an expectation for faculty.

Additionally, we acknowledged that faculty, regardless of hearing status, do not all exhibit optimal oral communication skills or demonstrate application of understandings of how to enhance oral communication (e.g., appropriately managing environmental factors).

- Definition: The CTF has broadly defined “oral communication” as:
 - Speech, with or without voice, used expressively and / or receptively, alone or to complement a message communication with signs.

The term “oral communication strategies and techniques” refers to a broad array of knowledge and skills. Some of these are the following:

- understanding the specific components of speech for expression and reception, including voicing and visible mouth movements;
 - optimizing abilities to use these components to enhance intelligibility of the message;
 - knowledge of how to enhance the environment for oral communication, including adapting room lighting, attending to unwanted noise sources, and positioning the participants;
 - understanding the relation between hearing characteristics (e.g., degrees of hearing loss and anticipated performance capabilities) and listening requirements (e.g., assistive listening devices);
 - knowledge of how to adapt language structure and word choice, and skills in using these techniques;
 - using nonverbal communication and interaction dynamics to enhance the intelligible exchange of spoken information;
 - using pronunciation symbol systems and other written information to enhance speech expression and speech reception.
- Application of the Expectations to all Faculty: It was a basis of our recommendations that faculty should not impose their personal philosophies and choices on others, especially students, whether these philosophies are oriented manually or orally. We are in agreement with previous communication committees (see Section IIB) that all faculty should accept the responsibility for acquiring a variety of skills; that deaf faculty should acquire a knowledge of appropriate communication behaviors to communicate effectively with hearing individuals, as well as the reverse; and that all should develop an awareness of their own communication capabilities. Attainment of these goals will demonstrate a respect for the variety of needs and communication perspectives represented within the Institute.
 - Documentation: The expectations related to oral communication have been stated as activities because assessment schemes parallel to those developed for sign language assessment have yet to be developed. Though a level of achievement cannot be specified at this time, faculty can be expected to avail themselves of instructional programs, information seminars, and application exercises that are currently available. Questions related to issues of assessment of oral communication have been included in the research and evaluation plan.

SECTION IVC

INTERPRETING THE INTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The expectations described in Section IVA are intended to foster a positive environment that will encourage all members of the NTID community to participate in an ongoing, collective communication improvement process. The CTF believes that implementation of the communication recommendations will raise the sensitivities of all faculty within the Institute regarding the need to upgrade communication skills, whether or not the motivation is a specific attainment such as tenure and promotion. We believe all faculty can be caught up in the atmosphere of striving toward improved communication abilities. To this end, the CTF developed its recommendations with a positive attitude toward growth and attainment. The recommendations do not include any statements of consequences for faculty who do not meet expectations, because the CTF wished to avoid a system that is potentially punitive and therefore counterproductive.

To attain a healthy, productive approach to the communication skill development of all NTID faculty, it is necessary that each faculty member and his / her chairperson develop an understanding of personal needs for communication growth and design a plan of specific actions to meet those needs. This may include increasing opportunities for communication coursework or other activities by decreasing other involvements. It is not the intention of the CTF to mandate any specific workload adjustments, but it is clear that each department chairperson has a responsibility for supporting the communication skill development of all faculty in that department. Several mechanisms for providing this support are suggested in Section VA, "Administrative Responsibilities." Such an involvement of chairpersons must occur in the context of a larger Institute support process, assuring a consistency among departments in providing faculty support and assuring that both chairperson and faculty are provided an institutional context in which they can experience successful communication skill development.

Expectations for communication skill development and documentation are presented with a certain spirit of intent and an appreciation of some of the complexities involved in addressing this important issue while promoting a rich, rewarding sense of language community at NTID. The following comments are provided to assist faculty in interpreting the intent of the CTF recommendations.

1. Sign language expectations

While the establishment and implementation of Institute-wide expectations for sign language skill development may appear straightforward, such a task is complicated by a variety of factors, of which some of the more critical are:

- the need for consistent application of expectations to an Institute faculty numbering approximately 275;
- the fact that individuals vary in skill development, yet they will be facing peer review and administrative review pertinent to their sign language skill development at defined times for tenure, as well as varied times for promotion;
- the fact that any given individual's sign language skill development is influenced, in part, by a variety of factors such as: (1) amount of sustained interaction one has with students, faculty, and staff who are deaf; (2) the initiative one takes to create ongoing interaction opportunities with students, faculty, and staff who are deaf when one's job responsibilities do not normally or consistently involve such occurrences; (3) whether one joined the NTID community with previous experience and skill in communicating with people who are deaf, or with no relevant communication experiences, skills, and knowledge; (4) affective variables such as attitudes and motivation; (5) physical variables; (6) age; (7) learning styles; and (8) training philosophy, methodology, and opportunities.

Given the above factors and the importance of the tenure review and promotion processes to both individuals and the Institute, a fair approach is to implement clearly defined expectations and guidelines that are understood by everyone concerned (i.e., individuals undergoing review and the faculty peers and administrators conducting the

review). It is the position of this Communication Task Force that faculty peers and administrators need only address two questions in developing their judgments regarding an individual’s sign language skills:

1. Has an individual fully met the Institute expectations?
2. If not, has the individual made acceptable progress toward the goal? It may be deemed appropriate in light of other qualifications and given extenuating circumstances, to accept other than the stated level at the time of the evaluation with the expectation that the individual will achieve that level of sign language in the reasonably near future.

It is to be judged whether an individual’s professional development effort up to the time of the review, documents a sustained and good faith effort, as well as whether an individual’s SCPI rating suggests he or she will meet the Institute’s expectations.

The issue of sufficient documentation will probably always remain primarily a judgment call (e.g., has there been sustained participation and effort within a defined professional development plan; or spotty participation over time; or “last-minute” rush to attempt to meet expectations; etc.). Nevertheless, these judgments should be guided by the intent and spirit of the recommendations:

If an individual does not attain the expected rating on the SCPI by the time of review for tenure / promotion, and if it is determined by those conducting the review that it is appropriate to assess progress rather than current level of achievement, the question arises, “What rating is considered to be close enough to indicate that, with additional sustained effort, he or she would reasonably be able to successfully attain the expected rating in the near future?”

We make the following recommendations for interpreting achievement of SCPI ratings:

SCPI RATING SCALE – Tenure Review and Promotion to Assistant Professor	
Superior Plus Superior Advanced Plus Advanced	Meets Institute expectations.
Intermediate Plus	Acceptable if candidate shows good progress toward Advanced rating; must be accompanied by strong evidence of a variety of ongoing efforts to improve performance.
Intermediate	Generally not acceptable. (See pp. 29-30)
Survival Plus Survival Novice Plus Novice 0	Not acceptable regardless of job responsibilities

RATING SCALE-	Promotion to Associate Professor and Professor and Ongoing Expectations for All Tenured Faculty
Superior Plus Superior Advanced Plus Advanced	Meets Institute expectations.
.....	
Intermediate Plus	Generally not acceptable unless candidate shows good progress toward Advanced rating; must be accompanied by strong evidence of a variety of ongoing efforts to improve performance.
Intermediate Survival Plus Survival Novice Plus Novice 0	Not acceptable

2. Oral communication expectations

In writing its recommendations for oral communication, the CTF was confronted with a variety of complicating factors, including:

- Oral communication has previously not been clearly defined for the purposes of determining and addressing faculty development needs.
- Institute support for the development of oral communication skills has not been consistently defined or implemented.
- Deaf faculty may not be users of oral communication by choice or necessity.
- The need for hearing and deaf faculty to optimize their oral communication skills has previously not been broadly acknowledged.

Given the factor described above, the CTF emphasizes:

- It is not the intent of the CTF recommendations to violate the rights of deaf or hearing faculty to select the communication modes, techniques, or adaptations that will best serve the needs of any given communication situation. The purpose of the recommendations is to promote skill development (what one can do) rather than to prescribe communication style (what one must do). It is the intent that, by developing a variety of skills, faculty will be equipped to adapt to a variety of communication situations.
- Recommendations related to oral strategies and techniques are not intended to be discriminatory. To meet the expectations related to oral communication skill for tenure and promotion, a faculty member need not demonstrate a specified level of oral communication performance. Rather, there must be sufficient documentation to demonstrate sustained, good faith efforts to acquire knowledge, understanding, and attitudes; and to determine the extent to which one's visual and auditory intelligibility can be optimally enhanced. These are considered to be attainable goals for all.

- Oral communication skill development is intended to build on existing abilities. Administrators and faculty must consider individuals capabilities, based on their previous experience and current functioning. It is not the intent of the recommendations to force anyone to pursue an unreasonable expectation (e.g., extended speech instruction for deaf faculty members for whom speech has not been part of their communication back ground). Fairness and consistency in this regard across the Institute are to be mediated and monitored administratively as outlined in Section VA -“Administrative Responsibilities”.

SECTION V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- A. Administrative Responsibilities
- B. Phase-In Considerations
- C. Resource Considerations
- D. Evaluation and Research Considerations

SECTION VA

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The CTF realizes that learning to use sign language and oral strategies and techniques as well as developing a knowledge base and cultural sensitivities requires individual commitment to learning in both formal and informal settings. We also realize that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own communication skill development. However, as faculty so clearly stated during the interview and feedback process, the success of the CTF recommendations rests on administrative support. This theme is re-emphasized in the “Assumptions and Principles Underlying the Recommendations”. Administrative responsibility for facilitating communication skill development for all faculty is crucial. Academic administrators need to accept this responsibility seriously and provide leadership (exemplary and administrative) on both a short-term and long-term basis.

A variety of well-designed strategies for implementing administrative support must come from all levels of administration, led by the Dean. The administrative support to assist faculty in communication skill development is seen by the CTF as an investment by the Institute which will result in student satisfaction and retention, an enhanced learning environment, and a dynamic language community. Therefore, the CTF strongly believes that support must be built into the mission and budget planning process across schools/divisions and departments.

In order to assure consistent application of NTID expectations for communication skill, the Dean, in concert with the Assistant/Associate Deans and chairpersons in each school/division, will have to implement an Institute-wide system of support to address pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion expectations for all faculty members regardless of job functions. Below are the CTF’s recommendations in this regard:

1. Responsibilities of the Dean

- a. Dean’s Office will provide in writing the expectations for communication skill to all new faculty in a letter of hire and to all faculty on a regular basis.
- b. The dean will aid all academic administrators in their support of communication skill development for faculty through all stages (pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure and promotion). In the case of faculty in administrative positions, support will be the responsibility of their immediate supervisor or other appropriate administrator. Mechanisms can include:
 - POW process
 - communication skill development plan
 - observations, SCPI rating, etc.
 - merit increment process
 - workload considerations
- c. The Dean needs to work closely with the Assistant and Associate Deans to assure that there is consistency of expectations, consistency of support in communication skill development, and fairness in application of expectations for all faculty across the Institute.
- d. The Dean will monitor the peer review judgment process related to the communication skill criterion for tenure and promotion to assure consistent and equitable application of the recommendations across schools/divisions and tenure/promotion committees.
- e. The Dean will initiate implementation of the guidelines, including the necessary administrative cooperation, phase-in activities, readiness of resources, and evaluation and research plan.

2. Responsibilities of other administrators

- a. Assistant and Associate Deans, with chairpersons, will review through the probationary period the individual progress of faculty seeking tenure.
- b. Assistant and Associate Deans, with chairperson, will support communication skill development through all stages (pre-tenure, tenure, post-tenure, and promotion).

In enhancing communication skill development of new and veteran faculty, the CTF further emphasizes that the Institute, at all levels, must be firmly committed to making the recommendations a reality by allocating appropriate resources (time and money) to this effort. The CTF recommends the following:

1. All faculty should be fully supported in their communication skill development until they reach the Advanced level SCPI rating. The CTF feels strongly that a variety of creative strategies by faculty, chairpersons, and Assistant and Associate Deans for implementing full support can accomplish this goal and that planning should stem from the central administration.
2. Maintaining or furthering the advanced level target goal should be the professional development responsibility of each faculty member. However, it is clear that administrative support is also needed for faculty who have achieved the Advanced level on the SCPI. The Institute needs to assure the professional development strategies are available to faculty wishing to continue sign language study and communication skill development. Sign language study must be viewed as a legitimate use of professional development time and be accorded the same status as other faculty efforts.

SECTION VB

PHASE-IN CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout its deliberations, the CTF has sought to develop expectations and guidelines that would be fair to the faculty. This point is especially important when addressing the issue of implementation the recommendations. The CTF feels strongly that we must consider the needs of current faculty who may not have had optimal learning opportunities or support in the area of communication skill development. Transitions must be provided by the Institute for both new faculty and veteran faculty so that the implementation of recommendations can be achieved in a positive manner.

New faculty being hired after the recommendations have been accepted will thus be provided with clear expectations and timelines. Our recommendation for all other faculty seeking tenure and promotion is that there be a three-year phase-in period. The phase-in period will begin immediately upon official approval of the recommendations, with full implementation to occur three years after that approval.

The CTF does not wish to delay the implementation of these recommendations, yet at the same time realizes that there must be some equality in how people are judged when new and more specific guidelines are used. A three-year phase in period is not meant to imply an “escape” mechanism or a watering down of expectations for the next three years. The CTF views it as a period of transition in which the spirit of these guidelines will become more established and individuals will be provided with support as they continue to achieve their communication skill development goals.

In this regards, the CTF recommends the following:

- All faculty, during the phase-in period, are requested to take the SCPI on a voluntary basis. This includes all faculty who have not yet obtained an SCPI rating and those who have not updated their rating in the 3 years prior to the phase-in period. The purposes of this rating are:
 - a. to provide confidential information to faculty members on their current level of performance,
 - b. to aid in their establishing a communication skill development plan,
 - c. to provide group data (which will protect the identity of individuals) necessary for carrying out the Institute’s research plan.
- Newly-hired faculty (this pertains to faculty who are hired during the phase-in period as well as faculty hired after full implementation of the guidelines) will:
 - a. participate fully in intensive new staff training activities during their first year of hire,
 - b. continue annual involvement in learning activities, following a communication skill development plan with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member,
 - c. at the discretion of the faculty member, take the SCPI after 2 years of employment and a t least once thereafter prior to tenure review or consideration for promotion,
 - d. by tenure/promotion review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy the documentation requirement.
- Current faculty (hired prior to the phase in) working towards **Tenure**:
 1. To be reviewed for tenure during the phase-in

During the phase-in period, faculty:

- a. Will follow pre-existing tenure guidelines which will be used to judge attainment of qualifications in the area of communication according to current practice. [(According to the

“RIT Tenure Policies and NTID Administrative Guidelines and Criteria for Tenure of Full-Time Faculty” modified May, 1990: “Competency should be demonstrated by substantial evidence obtained through items such as student and colleague evaluations, on-site observations, written communication and formal assessments of sign language and other communication competencies” (p.6)]

- b. Cannot be denied tenure solely on the basis of the new recommendations until the recommendations are fully implemented.

2. To be reviewed for tenure after the phase-in

During the phase-in period, faculty will:

- a. at the faculty member’s discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;
- b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;
- c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;
- d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectations in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson;
- e. by tenure review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy the document requirement.

- Current faculty (hired prior to the phase-in) working towards **Promotion**:

1. To be reviewed for promotion during the phase-in

During the phase-in period, faculty

- a. will follow pre-existing promotion guidelines which will be used to judge attainment of qualifications in the area of communication according to current practice. [According to NTID and RIT “Proposed Guidelines, Procedures, and Qualifications for Promotion in Rank of Full-Time Faculty” modified May, 1990: “Competency should be demonstrated by substantial evidence obtained through items such as student and colleague evaluations, on-site observations, written communication and formal assessments of sign language and other communication competencies” (p.6).]
- b. cannot be denied promotion solely on the basis of the new recommendations until the recommendations are fully implemented.

2. To be reviewed for promotion after the phase-in

During the phase-in period, faculty will:

- a. at the faculty member’s discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;
- b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;
- c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;
- d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectations in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson;
- e. by promotion review time, obtain an SCPI rating to satisfy documentation requirement.

- Current tenured faculty not seeking promotion

During the phase-in period, faculty will:

- a. at the faculty member's discretion, take the SCPI to determine current level of sign skill;
- b. prepare a communication skill development plan, with the advice of their chairperson and a sign communication specialist, sought at the initiative of the faculty member;
- c. include in the communication skill development plan a review of attainments in the areas of knowledge and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues and in oral communication strategies and techniques;
- d. adjust their plan of work to reflect whatever priority level is necessary to accomplish expectation in the area of communication, as negotiated with their chairperson.

SECTION VC

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the investigative process, as well as in formulating the recommendations, the CTF realized that the Institute expectations and guidelines had to be achievable within current and future resources. The CTF believes it is crucial that the Institute provide well-developed training opportunities that will facilitate faculty development in communication skill and will enable individuals to attain their highest goals. Two issues seem pertinent regarding resources. One is the adequacy of current training opportunity and the second is the management of the SCPI.

Training Opportunities

From its inception, NTID has provided sign language training to new and veteran faculty. Training opportunities have changed throughout this time to reflect changing needs of both students and faculty. Knowledge of sign language and knowledge about approaches used in teaching sign language to adults have also influenced these changes. Currently, formal programs in sign language training are offered through the Sign Communication Department. Learning experiences in sign language have also been developed through the Office of Faculty Development, the Department of Support Service Education, the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Continuing Education.

In all of these programs, efforts have been made to offer different types of experiences to faculty (formal courses, workshops/seminars, individual tutoring, and so on). Thus, in implementing the recommendations, the Institute has programs to call upon for faculty desiring sign language training.

Questions have been raised throughout our investigation about the adequacy of the training resources and the appropriateness and effectiveness of current programs. We cannot know at this time if sign language training resources are enough or if all faculty who seek training will be given appropriate opportunities. We also cannot address the appropriateness or effectiveness of such programs. We do expect all to those involved in any training effort to honor the diversity of needs of faculty-as-learners and to maintain an objective of meeting the diversity of communication modes represented among NTID students. This will require a balanced perspective by those involved in training efforts that supports the Institute philosophy of eclecticism. It may mean that communication skill instructors will have to make a special effort to identify techniques (e.g. eliminating voice during receptive practice) as NTID students. These issues need to be investigated both within the research and evaluation plan (Section VD) recommended by the CTF and administratively through the Dean's Office. These issues and others raised by faculty must be openly discussed and appropriate changes made if the recommendations herein are to be achieved.

Others areas needing additional resource allocation include the development of learning opportunities for faculty in simultaneous communication and oral communication strategies and techniques which are not currently offered regularly or effectively incorporated into communication skill development plans for faculty. Although some work is being done in this regard, the CTF recommends that these areas be examined and courses/workshops/seminars in (a) simultaneous communication and (b) oral communication strategies and techniques be made available on a regular basis to faculty at various levels of sign language skill.

Because adequacy of training opportunities is crucial to the success of the guidelines, the CTF recommends establishing regular programs review of this effort. This review should be conducted jointly by faculty and administrators to determine periodically the adequacy and efficacy of communication training resources and to identify ongoing needs.

Management of SCPI

Because the SCPI will be required assessment for all faculty seeking tenure and promotion, it is important that the administration of the SCPI be addressed.

The CTF believes that the management of this evaluation procedure be separated from any current department involved in the teaching of sign language. We recommend that an SCPI Office be created to coordinate, manage, and evaluate activities related to administering the SCPI. Furthermore, this SCPI Office should be housed in a unit within Career Development Programs (but not within the Sign Communication Department) that will facilitate appropriate cooperative efforts to further the research and evaluation plan regarding the SCPI.

The CTF stresses that this Office must represent in good faith the best interests of NTID as well as all of its faculty and students. It is expected that this Office, its personnel and operations, will aid in developing an environment conducive to establishing the positive academic process and support referred to in the principles. This Office must not be subject to any one perspective but will represent all interdivisional perspectives. Furthermore, the Office will operate to support the Institute research and evaluation plan. If deemed appropriate, this Office will incorporate research and evaluation findings into its activities.

One of the responsibilities of the Office will be to ensure that faculty are aware of their rights within the process (e.g. to request a re-interview with a different interviewer or to request a re-rating with a different rating team). It is recommended that the process be expanded to include a “warm-up” or familiarization period prior to the actual interview.

The number of raters for this assessment procedure and the time commitment required of them will be substantial. The CTF believes that a pool of raters should be recruited from within NTID. Criteria to become an SCPI rater (rating of at least Advanced Plus on the SCPI and satisfactory completion of training) have already been established. The Task Force is satisfied with the criteria and recommends that these criteria be accepted. Furthermore, the CTF recommends that at least one deaf person (out of three raters) be included in each and every rating process. Moreover, it must be stressed that all raters will be expected to maintain professionalism and confidentiality on all matters related to achievement of communication expectations.

Support to establish and train a pool of raters will be necessary because SCPI raters will be accepting responsibility that will be of importance to NTID. We recommend that the Dean in concert with the Assistant and Associate Deans recognize the raters as individuals providing valuable service to NTID and that their services be reflected as part of their plan of work. The Assistant and Associate Deans will work with the SCPI Office to develop and schedule this pool of trained raters.

The effectiveness of the SCPI Office and other issues that may arise from the CTF recommendations related to the SCPI will be researched and evaluated as indicated in Section VD.

SECTION VD

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

While the data available to date on the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) have provided guidance in selecting the recommended expectations for tenure and promotion, important questions still need to be examined. Because taking the SCPI has been voluntary up to now, there may be some self-selection bias in the data currently available. Other limitations also exist with the current data since its intent was never to answer questions pertinent to implementing an Institute standard for sign language.

Therefore, it is recommended that a research and evaluation plan be simultaneously established with the implementation of the recommended “Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...” It is suggested that this plan include mechanisms to:

- develop an Institute-wide database for the SCPI inclusive of all ranked faculty in tenure line positions and examine SCPI ratings related to a variety of factors:
 - number of years at NTID
 - number and frequency of courses taken in relation to progress in improving SCPI rating
 - faculty rank
 - type of job position
 - student evaluation and feedback data
 - other factors as identified
- address questions and issues important to both faculty and administrators.

By maintaining an on-going database on the “Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...” it will be possible in the future to answer questions such as:

1. What is the overall profile of the entire NTID faculty pertinent to the “Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...”?
2. How does a given individual compare to the entire faculty (or specific categories of faculty defined by rank, time at NTID, etc.) pertinent to the “Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communications...”?
3. What is the test-retest, inter-rater, and intra-rater reliability of the SCPI?
4. What is the relation between expected rating on the SCPI and functional communication performance as measured in other ways?
5. What is the effectiveness of the training and assessment efforts on development of sign language skill and oral communication strategies and techniques, including operation of the SCPI Office?
6. Is attainment beyond the Advanced level on the SCPI reasonable?
7. How can we assess attainment of oral communication strategies and techniques? Can level of attainment be addressed? Can a specific level be recommended?
8. What other assessment tools can be developed to evaluate sign language skills in contexts such as the classroom, group meetings, etc.?

Furthermore, an ongoing database and research and evaluation plan would be invaluable in reviewing the “Institute Expectations and Guidelines for Communication...” to determine if any refinements or adjustments need to be made. The entire set of guidelines will be subject to regular “program review” every five years.

Ensuring that this type of research and evaluation plan is conducted will be the responsibility of the Assistant Dean, Division of Communication Programs, in concert with the Dean of NTID.

SECTION VI

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY AND STAFF

SECTION VI

CONSIDERATION FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY AND STAFF

Ideally, the Institute should have the same communication expectations for all faculty and staff so that no one at NTID would suffer because of inequities in communication standards. However, this is difficult to enforce because those who teach at NTID vary widely in their professional status and contractual arrangements.

NTID has many visiting and permanent part-time faculty who are not directly affected by the recommendations of the CTF regarding tenure and promotion. These faculty members are contributing in significant ways to the education of deaf students at NTID. The Institute, recognizing the importance of cultural issues has been supporting developing of sign language skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues. This support, however, must be dramatically expanded in order to enable non-tenure track faculty to have similar levels of skill in sign language as their tenure track colleagues and must also include opportunities to develop oral communication strategies and techniques. The CTF, therefore, has developed recommendations for visiting and permanent part-time faculty. Adjunct faculty are not included in this category. The CTF recommends special study of adjunct faculty to determine appropriate communication expectations and learning opportunities.

Although the CTF's charge was to focus solely on communication for faculty, it is our strong feeling that all professional and general staff, regardless of job responsibility, be given sufficient and appropriate opportunities to reach communication goals. There are many members of the NTID community with professional and general staff status involved in direct teaching and tutoring of deaf students either on a full-time or part-time basis. In its deliberations on classroom communication, the CTF learned of student complaints about the communication abilities of some of their instructors, but it was not always clear how many complaints applied to tenure-track faculty. Students do not always distinguish between tenure-track, visiting adjunct, or part-time faculty, or even between faculty and staff. CTF recommendations for faculty have emphasized repeatedly the importance of communication competence in instructional roles. It is seen as vital that communication recommendations are also developed for all professional and general staff involved in teaching. Further investigation into student satisfaction levels with staff communication skills is recommended to help determine the needs of this group of instructors.

The CTF realizes that many professional and general staff are not directly involved in instruction, but have substantial student contact and/or interaction with deaf faculty and staff and feel strongly about developing their communication skill. This need has led the CTF to recommend that this group also be provided appropriate communication development opportunities.

The following recommendations have been developed by the CTF for the specified groups involved. Because of the varying contractual arrangements of these individuals, no specific level or timeline can be established by the CTF.

Recommendation for Visiting and Permanent Part-Time Faculty

- Visiting faculty who receive renewable contracts, as well as permanent part-time faculty, are expected to show evidence of the following:
 - Persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skill, and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues
 - Development of sign language skills and oral communication strategies and techniques

The same kind of documentation is to be provided outlined for tenure-track faculty in these areas of expectation.

In order to enable non-tenure track faculty to achieve these goals, it is important to recommend specific administrative mechanisms. These are:

- The Dean's Office will provide in writing expectations for communication skill development to all new and veteran visiting and permanent part-time faculty.
- Chairpersons will support the communication skill development of visiting and permanent part-time faculty through such mechanisms as:
 - compensated time
 - salary
 - workload considerations
 - communication skill development plan
 - periodic review of SCPI ratings

Recommendation for Adjunct Faculty

Because the issues surrounding the use of adjunct faculty are so complex, the CTF recognizes that they may need to be provided with unique mechanisms to enable them to reach the communication levels recommended for tenure track faculty. The CTF recommends that the needs of adjunct faculty be investigated further by the Dean's Office. The CTF also recommends that consideration be given to the employment of interpreters for classes taught by adjunct faculty who work full-time in another organization and do not possess sufficient sign language skill to meet the classroom standards established for other faculty.

Recommendations for Professional and General Staff Involved in Teaching

- Professional and general staff involved in teaching are expected to show evidence of the following:
 - persistence in seeking appropriate learning activities for maintaining and improving communication skill and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues
 - development of sign language skills oral communication strategies and techniques

The same kind of documentation is to be provided as outlined for tenure track faculty in these areas of expectation.

In order to enable professional and general staff involved in teaching to achieve these goals, it is important to recommend specific administrative mechanisms. These are:

- The Dean's Office will provide in writing expectations for communication skill development to all new and veteran professional and general staff involved in teaching.
- Chairpersons will support the communication skill development of professional and general staff involved in teaching through such mechanisms as:
 - compensated time
 - salary increments
 - workload considerations
 - communication skill development plan
 - periodic review of SCPI ratings

Because the roles of professional and general staff involved in teaching differ from those of faculty and are so variable, the CTF also recommends that the communication needs of this group be further investigated by the Dean's Office.

Recommendation for Professional and General Staff Not Involved in Teaching

Recognizing that current policies may vary from department to department, the CTF recommends that all staff not directly involved in teaching also be expected to participate in activities/efforts to develop communication skills and sensitivity to deaf cultural issues on an on-going basis. Because the circumstances of professional and general staff are so variable, the CTF recommends that their needs to be investigated further by the Dean's Office.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

COMPILATION OF FACULTY-STUDENT VIEWPOINTS

The following has been distilled from interviews, discussions, and forums held by and within the Task Force prior to writing the first draft of the recommendations (May 15, 1989). There has been an attempt to represent all viewpoints which were expressed. No judgments were made about the relevance of any comment and there was no intention to provide a reconciliation of opposing viewpoints. Organizational headings indicate the context in which each comment was made. Importance or degree of support for any comment is not to be inferred from wording, placement, or length of an item; all viewpoints were equally respected.

1. Scope of consideration

There was an intense struggle to define communication. It seems recognizable if not definable. It is claimed to be unique to the individual or to the circumstances. It has parts that might be as important as its whole.

Unique

“You know it when you see it, but it’s difficult to define.”

The definition of effectiveness may not be the same for me as for others.

Someone else’s strategies may not work in my classroom.

It’s always changing, depending on the situation.

Tied to teaching/learning

Cannot separate communication from teaching.

It’s everything you do.

But we are not to describe a philosophy of education.

Effective teaching is not the same as communication competence, it is more.

Status of communication competence limits teaching effectiveness; curriculum is reduced to what we can communicate, so we look effective.

Not to be defined by what one does, but by the results of what one does; not the means, but the end; not the expression, but the reception (students’ understanding); product, not process.

Communication requires transfer of ideas; a mutuality of understanding.

Must be able to get the concept across, show the vocabulary; may mean a lot of fingerspelling.

Includes structuring of communication, interaction; preparing students for discussion; knowing the right questions to ask; helping students negotiate English; giving good examples or reading assignments.

I like when teachers use examples, references, not too much repetition.

Specificity to situation/purpose

Must consider communication purposes: (a) relating at a personal level, (b) giving information, (c) modeling communication.

Faculty have more than one role they might assume; cannot separate communication competence from the purpose of communication in the classroom.

Can focus better on defining communication if you specify specific situations such as classroom lecture or one-to-one communication.

We can probably generalize the skills needed over various situations, but should keep aware of differences due to situation (e.g., knowledge of vocabulary, discipline, for lectures; ability to respond to demand for individual modes in one-to-one).

Adaptability

Communication is versatility, adapting to modes, student needs, course objectives, audience; ability to combine a variety of modes; saying the same thing several ways; flexibility in matching technique to the problem and

changing modes if necessary.
Communication is what makes us special at NTID because we can communicate with each and any student.
Students have had to adapt to faculty.
In one-to-one situations, faculty should be able to accommodate any student.

Ease

The ideal communicator has easy, fluent exchanges; can work with variety of communication styles in variety of situations, expressively and receptively; with comfort.
Should be able to communicate directly with a student (not through another student).
Looking at complexity level of communication tells you how “good” it is; if it happens without thinking about it, then it is effective.
Fluency and clarity are not enough; should also be responsive to student perspectives-whether or not student indicates understanding (How does teacher judge if student understands?); sometimes there is miscommunication because the student’s skills are poor.

Reciprocity

For a given individual, we must examine ability to receive communication as well as to send it.
Should foster and facilitate communication among students; if students participate, then communication is good; presence of feedback is a good sign that communication is not just one-way (must also be aware that feedback can be nonverbal and sometimes is false).
Should use good eye contact.
Teachers should be able to engage students in a discussion; handle issues and questions in depth, not superficially.
Our concern should not be just communicating to students, but to faculty, as well.

Modes-components

Communication is not just use of a particular mode.
If defined by its components, we lose the whole.
It is too simplistic to try to categorize students by mode; there is more diversity (complexity) here; should speak to the diversity rather than try to simplify.
We should study the profile of our students; what is the diversity of their skills and the implications?

Can person compensate for sign limitations through strengths in other areas (e.g., use of good media; good speech)?

There are known instances of faculty with weak sign skills who still are effective teachers.

Emphasize sign; allow no sloppy signs or shortcuts; teach good fingerspelling.
Movement, action, eye contact, facial expression, smooth delivery are important to me.
I want faculty to reach my native ASL level, don’t use basic vocabulary; use everyday signs.
Don’t have other students voice for me; read my signs.
Faculty should be skilled in sign before they are hired; before they are put in the classroom.

Is technically-correct sign production all there is to evaluate? Or are there other facets?

“Sign language” is really a continuum of representations of language; few here use only ASL or only spoken English.

Sign is not all there is to good communication, not the only thing important for communication; sign language alone is not the answer; only a small segment of students complains about the quality of sign.

Emphasizing sign does not mean that we want to exclude other competencies.

Learning sign can have a negative effect on production of speech during SimCom.

Good communication is not just what the Sign Communication Department teaches.

Use of voice is essential.

Recently, most of my students have been orally trained and don’t sign at all.

I cannot understand when teacher uses no voice; but I also need sign.

Lip movement is important.

Students are mixed in any given classroom re: communication styles.
Classes of mixed students are very difficult to teach; impossible to teach effectively.
Teacher must be a bridge among students in the class; serve as interpreter for those who cannot or will not communicate with other students.

Attitude

Communication includes interpersonal skills; communicating your personhood.
Should be ready to share self with the student.
My teacher should be able to relate to students; be motivating; be patient.
I want the teacher to show emotions.
Must show an interest in student learning, in and out of class.
Communication is caring about the material being taught (loving what you teach), enthusiasm.
Wrong attitude can result in avoidance of communication with certain faculty, students; or a hiring bias (may be an administrative problem).

Caring provides a balance for skill level.
Enthusiasm (animation) counts more than technical skill.
Attitude can be overvalued; at some point you must say you can or cannot communicate.

Communication requires a desire to be understood and to understand.
Must value communication and show it.
Should have open mindedness about students, an accepting attitude.
Good attitude is shown in going out to pursue tutoring, courses, workshops; evaluating a videotape with a mentor.

2. Sources of the problem

Lack of guidance/policy

There have been no clear Institute expectations.
Tenure and promotion guidelines do not specify expectations.
Expectations should be exemplified by leaders signing for themselves.
Methods of sign training were confused with expectations of how to communicate in the classroom resulting in a de facto policy.
Faculty themselves cannot be blamed for their poor skills.
Nothing has been required of faculty.
Support has been lacking.
Faculty need to be allowed to take the time to learn (this is what support means).
With decentralization, communication skill growth depended on professional development plans created independently within departments; these have been ineffective.
In the past, sign classes were selected on the basis of needs which were determined by a checklist of skills; now courses are not selected on this basis; completion of courses does not signify anything now.
Communication seems to have been given a lower priority than academics and research.
Philosophy of eclecticism results in a feeling that we can't be perfect in all ways, so we wind up with mediocrity.

Chairpersons

Chairs tend to ignore the issue; then, since they are not addressing it, it disappears as a problem.
Chairs tend to go the comfortable route, saying nothing negative, because there is no standard.
Chairs write "Improve communication skills" into POW, but no one really knows what this means; no way is planned to measure improvement, so it gets lost at appraisal time.

3. Things to keep in mind when shaping our policy

Policy should be built around a concept of Striving for Excellence.

Policy must represent image that we want to project of NTID.

A policy on sign competence would show respect for deaf culture and deaf language.

Policy must result in a faculty who can serve all students, not just a select portion.

Policy should not be prescriptive of communication style.

Goals must be realistic.

Expectations should be clear from the beginning of a person's career here.

Recommendations must be clear, simple, understandable; then they will be easy to follow with a policy.

Should not be able to deny promotion because of absence of a policy.

Must be motivating.

Policy must not allow for personal judgments; must have a common standard; a person should not be able to be promoted in one school but not in another.

Policy should target different groups differently—new faculty, those approaching tenure, those who are tenured (long-term); but standard should be consistent across everyone regardless of tenure status.

Policy must set the basic conditions of employment; this enables a clear decision later about whether or not they have been met.

Policy will establish only a base skill level; it is to be understood that when I do my job I bring together many other skills.

4. Measurement

The problem of measurement is separate from that of documentation.

Must keep as separate issues: (a) required competencies and (b) how to evaluate them.

Should separate in assessment: (a) technical, (b) situational, and (c) affective communication skills.

Keep in mind that consequences are dire in tenure decisions (can lose job); not so in promotion or annual assessment.

Faculty as individuals

Maybe we don't want technically identical communication styles.

Consider individual differences of faculty, their strengths.

Nature of test situations

The assessment process must be a positive experience; focus on what person can do, plus recommendations for improvement.

It is scary that we will be evaluated; a threatening situation for faculty who are far removed from the tests of school days.

The thought of a test situation can result in failure.

Assessment vs. process

The bottom line must be whether or not we can get the job done; not assessment for the assessment's sake; how the job gets done is not important.

We should conduct an evaluation of "signing in the context of a teaching situation"; not conduct "a sign language evaluation".

Instead of making it an evaluation issue (which has negative connotations), it should be a shared collective growth experience with positive feedback.

Results should go to the individual, the one responsible for tenure and promotion.

Results should go beyond the individual because many do nothing with the results now.

Limits of testing

However we define it, we can only measure what is observable and can be applied consistently; cannot be subject to any arbitrariness; should yield clear expectations.

Can anyone evaluate overall effectiveness (if we want to look at the end rather than the means)?

Can an outside observer evaluate whether a person has done “whatever is effective”?

Timing

Testing must be available before tenure / promotion decision so faculty can review results and work on improvement.

Have pretenure / prepromotion interview (e.g., 2 years prior) with deaf faculty and students who give feedback; allows time for followup; interview provides documentation.

Relevance of testing

Tests are not real situations; must observe in the classroom, on the job.

You cannot evaluate communication-competence-in-the-classroom out of the context of the classroom.

Must include classroom evaluations by colleagues and students.

Teachers need to be effective communicators all day, not limited to classroom.

Observation

Classroom observation must be of sufficient duration, frequency; conducted by trained observer.

Quantity of tools

Must have a variety of ways to measure, several sources of information, multiple measures, multiple observations; not one tool; unfair to have one standard test if it is the sole opportunity to determine tenure / promotion.

Decisions that result from this are too important to allow them to rest on one tool.

Should combine formal tools and informal peer / student judgments.

Readiness to move ahead

We need to find out more about research findings in assessing second language learning.

Can a language be learned in 2-3 years?

Do we know yet how to define ASL (or other system)?

5. Participants

Who should decide who is competent? Who has the right to say?

May need to establish and recognize certain people as qualified to do classroom observation and evaluation.

How are evaluators evaluated?

Evaluators must be trusted by the faculty; should be mentors (not chairs).

We must separate the training and the evaluations processes (and personnel responsible for each).

Directives from administration can be threatening.

Colleagues

It is my responsibility to be sure my skills are up to par; should not depend on colleagues' feedback.

If evaluation is from colleagues, it would really be seen as working toward professional growth, not threatening.

Evaluation by colleagues can be effective only if confidential.

Peer review requires checks and balances to ensure fairness.

There is not a lot of honesty in peer evaluation.

Chairpersons

Not credible, not trained, not model communicators, not appropriate as evaluators.

Currently, tenure / promotion committees must judge a chair's qualifications to provide an evaluation.

Chairs who are researchers, those who never associate with students, are not good resources for faculty.

Chairs who do not teach should not evaluate teaching.

There is a conflict if the chair's skills are less than those of the faculty, and if faculty are asked to improve; this is a problem that could be solved by peer review.

Chairs should be included in the review process because they know the individual best and know the job responsibilities.

Students

Students are the experts.

Students don't know the difference between friendly teacher and good communication ability; teacher who pressures students to learn may not be evaluated highly.

Students say that a good communicator is a good signer, but they are not aware of myriad of strategies being used.

When students complain they call it a sign language problem; don't know difference between poor teaching and poor communication.

Students are often too easy on us.

Student evaluation may not be as precise an evaluation, but it could be valuable--a different perspective.

Student opinion is important, but only one source of information; professionals still have to judge value of student comment.

Faculty should be required to submit student evaluations.

Must be trained as evaluators.

Issues: Must ensure students understand the questions; must write specific enough questions; must establish mechanisms to ensure fairness (to students and to faculty).

Student evaluation process must be objective.

Student panel is probably good for evaluating expressive sign, but may not help in evaluating receptive skills.

The IRS was not intended to document communication ability.

Students do not understand IRS questions adequately.

Instead of giving me the IRS, use essay questions to allow emotion, not just checkmarks.

6. Documentation

How can anyone document human interaction, attitude?

Letters of recommendation

Letters have political complications; puts author (deaf colleague) in uncomfortable position; it is known that faculty would not solicit an unfavorable letter.

Those who write letters of recommendation should observe individual first.

Courses

Sign courses are not effectively documented (e.g., attendance is an issue); currently are for professional development only.

Going to classes is not enough; must interact with the students.

Annual appraisals

Statements in annual appraisals are questionable because of the skill of the chair.

Options / requirements

Must specify what is required documentation, not just what is adequate, in order to be perfectly clear when decisions are to be made for promotion.

Use concept of a portfolio, options; let faculty be creative (e.g., submit videotape of class for tenure).

Have some required and some optional; should have many ways to document (more important than having multiple tools to measure).

Along with options, give some direction as to what documentation is acceptable (e.g., say that there must be at least 3 different types).

Too much flexibility allows an escape.

7. Areas to be assessed (see also Scope of Consideration)

For faculty's sake, they must know "the skills" that are necessary.

Must measure both expressive and receptive competence.

Need not be skilled expressively via all modes, but should understand all modes.

Areas needed include knowledge and sensitivity as well as skill.

Social interaction should be the means to competence, but does not have to be required; faculty will seek it out of the classroom if they want to grow.

Impossible to measure attitudes, but we should try to influence attitudes through training.

Should study good and poor communicators to find out what differentiates them; follow Berkeley study which focused on scholarship, presentation, control of group, rapport, and enthusiasm.

Interview the people who do classroom observation to find out what they look for; ask those who write letters of recommendation what they feel is important.

Part vs. whole

Must remember that communication is a complex of behaviors.

Do not try to chop up the whole of what teachers do; it does not add up to communication; have to see the whole picture together.

Don't categorize into separate modes; can be weak in one area but strong overall; the big picture should get the weight.

Getting too broad is a problem, too.

Situation-specific?

Are situational distinctions important (one-to-one, group, etc.)?

Modes

I do not intend to use ASL in the classroom, but will accept it and try to understand it.

Expressive ASL in the classroom is not the goal.

Should sign as close to English as possible; English is the real world and appropriate for an educational institution; ASL can be useful socially or to reinforce a concept in the classroom.

Many students do not know sign before they come here.

Good signing is a minimum for being a good communicator.

Must focus on sign first, establish it as an area of competence; other issues are important, but this should be taken care of separately so as not to lose it as in the past.

Competence in ASL will enhance signed English.

Should not evaluate oral--only because it is never used.

Evaluate level of vocabulary ("baby" vocabulary is a sign of poor skill).

Should test simultaneous communication ability.

Should show good mouth movement at a minimum.

8. Form of the assessment

We should not get sidetracked looking for exact measurement at this point; tenure and promotion are judgments.

Should include a process of periodic review for all faculty.

Assessment should be in the form of a development plan which becomes part of the evaluation for tenure and promotion.

Include a person's self-assessment and personal statement of what to work on.

Use peer review; reconsider peer review process developed through Faculty Council.

Need balance of direct tests and indirect (e.g., classroom observation).

Must not divorce tool from principal activity; teacher who does not sign well and looks poor on the test can still be a good teacher; may miss what makes a good teacher good.

Instead of courses and assessments, establish and require workshops for developing skills such as oral / aural. Adapt ideas from certification process used for interpreters. Use videotape--allows focus on sign component only.

Checklist

We can target several tracks (ASL principles, ASL receptive, SimComm, oral, strategies, etc.). Old NEST had a checklist of specific learnings, related assessment tools, and workshops to develop them. Old system allows us to know what faculty needed and how to train it. Old system had a test that faculty had to pass; showed that certain skills were acquired. Checklists can become so specific and detailed as to become a caricature of communication; e.g., what if a person gets 21 or 22 items--what is the decision? This can be silly. Checklist can look like a prescriptive standard; undesirable.

Observation

Observations are complex; it is hard to ignore all of the other things that happened in the room. For observation, use a list that is descriptive (what was done), not prescriptive (what should have been done); be positive. Chairs must learn how to do a pre- and post-observation meeting; not just go in for the one hour of teaching. Observation yields an unmanageable mountain of information.

Sign Communication Proficiency Interview

Does it apply to the classroom?
Too general; need tool more related to the classroom.
Not intended to tell you all you need to know about communication; this is only one test; we cannot evaluate all things with one measure.
Includes follow-up to guide skill development.
May need fine-tuning as we use it, but it is working in other locations.
Can be related to job function by showing a variety of rated tapes to those in that job; they choose which communicators could do the job; that rating becomes the level for that job.

Requires good conversational strategies as well as vocabulary; it is a functional test.
Tests expressive and receptive skill.
Provides more structure to the situation than can happen in the classroom with its random happenings; classroom involves many more factors which complicates the evaluation of sign skill.
Classroom does not show one's general communication skill which is shown in the interview.
Interview provides a record which can be reviewed over and over again, not fleeting like a classroom observation.

Presents the theoretically easiest, most comfortable situation (one-to-one); you talk about what you know best. Puts people at their best advantage; if cannot sign in the interview, then we know skills will be poor on the job. Score may be inflated.
Can be retaken if person feels nervous or was not at his/her best.

Should not assume that native ASL use (expressive or receptive) is the top of the scale (THE goal).
Cannot expect adult learners to achieve native level.
SCPI scale may limit highest achievable level if person uses PSE.

It is known that a person at the Intermediate level on the SCPI will break down in a group situation. Teachers should be at Advanced level on the SCPI by their 4th year (if they have daily contact with students).

9. Levels/Criteria

Faculty must know clearly "how good" is "good enough".

Level must be explicit.

There are no specific criteria (levels for other teaching skills [other qualifications for promotion], so let the tenure/promotion committees decide the criteria for communication, too.

The concept of level will foster a plateau in skill development.

Instead of a level, emphasize a process (e.g. set up a goal of 20 classes per year).

Minimum vs. ideal vs. range

Should we specify a minimum level for all faculty?

Using the term “minimum” may send the wrong message.

Minimum does not mean survival level.

Establishing a minimum may result in plateaus.

Should work toward “excellence”.

Must not set standard too low; don’t want to tenure person with poor skills, for students’ sake; should not be learning how to communicate while trying to teach; use an interpreter until person is skilled.

Should we specify the ideal and work backwards?

Specify a range of skills (range of acceptable levels) to allow flexibility of interpretation.

But a range would lack clear-cut decisiveness; would not give the “go/no go” information required by promotion and tenure committees.

Relation to modes

Should be very skilled in sign language, a high level; but hard to define this; not a basic level.

Must have better than survival level when first put in the classroom.

Must have an understanding that good sign skills do not make a good teacher; recognize that they are separate things.

Standard should relate to sign and to oral skills.

Can there be a different standard for each skill component? That would be very complicated.

Receptive skill should be higher than expressive (receptive should be at advanced level).

Near-native ASL level is intimidation as a goal, not possible.

ASL is not the objective of teaching; it has been said that we try to make our students “deaf”.

Students, who know ASL, know PSE (though, not the reverse); so we may not need to require ASL as a uniform standard unless a particular job function necessitates it.

Maybe we can specify several groups of student/faculty “types” (e.g. ASL, oral, SimCom) and faculty can master two out of three.

Should we have different levels for each rank; for salary increments?

Along with level, we must be ready to say how the chairs are to assess achievement of that level.

Timelines

Consider sign to be a prerequisite of tenure; not to be weighted with other criteria.

Can be dangerous to have timelines, cannot use same yardstick for everyone.

It took me 5 years to become comfortable with conducting a discussion in the classroom.

Should reach target level by 3rd year.

I grew up with ASL, yet cannot say how long it takes to learn it; I’m still learning.

Might have strict timelines for new faculty, and range of targets for veterans.

For tenured faculty, require additional classes if not at level.

Cannot learn the high level of sign needed through sign classes alone; need immersion (also teaches culture) which is the ideal toward which we should move.

Along with timelines must go written consequences.

Relation to job function

Standard must be reasonable.

Standard must be related to job function.

Different levels of expertise are needed for each job.

Cannot use same measure for all faculties because all do not teach.

What are Institute expectations for each job function?

Level won't really matter unless we can relate the scale to performance on the job.

Some faculty who do not have consistent daily contact with deaf individuals may be able to reach a specified level (e.g. intermediate) through attendance at sign courses, but maintaining a level is not possible for them.

Opportunities to use sign skills are crucial to establishing and maintaining them effectively (classroom interaction builds flexibility, creativity, and facility that researcher cannot develop).

Specify level for each job activity, not job title; if an administrator decides to do some teaching, the teachers' level will apply.

Ultimate skill level might be uniform, but timelines could be expanded for some faculty.

A persons' chair, with consultation from a Sign specialist can write goals for a given individual (do not need uniform levels).

Administrators who have deaf faculty need to be able to communicate with them and with students.

Chairs should be at intermediate level; or intermediate to advanced.

10. Motivation

Faculty must feel part of the change (change as process).

We need to develop caring training groups.

Faculty are willing, but a situation of support has been lacking.

Source

Faculty need incentives and rewards from administration.

Motivation must come from within, though Institute must set up expectations.

Learning has to be self-initiated.

Cannot force learning; or faculty will resist to the policy.

Given a policy, faculty will follow administration's guidelines.

Given basic expectations and assessments, faculty will pursue training opportunities.

Pressure will come as faculty see their peers achieving.

Monetary reward

Tie skill level to annual appraisal which itself influences tenure and promotion (but, for this, chair will need right sources of information).

Perhaps can tie communication achievements to merit pay, salary increments.

Can give merit pay for successful completion of sign instruction courses; may reduce absences from courses.

But any implications for salary must include readiness to be very clear as to why there is any difference among faculty in amount of increment.

Monetary reward may not be an enduring motivator.

Some faculty do not value the merit system.

Must be sure that achievement is respected by weighting it highly in tenure and promotion.

Reward a person's attempts to improve—this is motivational.

Make each level achievable; a taste of success is motivational.

For motivation, begin with faculty's strengths—simultaneous communication; gives encouragement to improve in other areas.

Veterans

There are no repercussions for veteran faculty; not motivated.

Some have been here a long time and still cannot communicate, but they say they can; if people "are not interested" in improving, then they must pay the price at tenure.

Policy should not be tied only to tenure and promotion processes because these occur too infrequently; will provide no motivation to learn sign.
Training/learning must be ongoing.

11. Advice for arriving at a solution

Assign faculty to sections by communication style; have teacher's mode listed along with course description in catalog.

Emphasize individuals' strengths; consider individual differences among faculty.

Because we need to teach a complexity of behaviors, look at interpreter training methods or at student communication training courses.

Need to reach a compromise—Deaf faculty try to use more English; hearing faculty try to use more ASL.

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