

# **Use of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview for Assessing the Sign Communicative Competence of Louisiana School for the Deaf Dormitory Counselor Applicants<sup>1</sup>**

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Assessment of the sign communicative competence of Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) dormitory counselor applicants is discussed. This discussion includes: (a) selection of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) for conducting this assessment, (b) a description of the SLPI, (c) selection and training of LSD personnel to conduct the SLPI, (d) SLPI methodology for LSD dormitory counselor applicants, and (e) establishment of SLPI standards for LSD dormitory counselor positions.

We shall never get the results from the teaching that we should until we improve the supervision of . . . pupils outside of the classroom. (Hurd, 1924, p. 115)

Hurd is one of many authors who has discussed the direct and supportive roles that dormitory personnel can serve in the development and learning of

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<sup>1</sup>At a meeting for persons interested in applying the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) to assessment of signing skills, it was decided to rename the *Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale* the *Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) Rating Scale*. Further, it was decided that a distinction was needed between assessment of American Sign

hearing-impaired students (deaf and hard-of-hearing) (Beckman, 1977; Haag, 1978; Naiman, 1972, 1974; Sisco, Kranz, Lund, & Schwarz, 1979). In recognition of these important roles, the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD), in July, 1980, submitted to the Louisiana Department of Civil Service a proposal for upgrading the position of Cottage Parent in the LSD dormitory system. In January, 1981, this proposal was approved, resulting in three Louisiana State Civil Service job positions or levels, Dormitory Counselors I, II, and III. The basic qualifications for these positions are: (a) one-to-three years experience in the care/training of deaf students and/or related college training; (b) skills in organizing and supervising dormitory programs and other after school student life activities; (c) skills in planning and organizing programming and supervising cottage parent/dormitory counselor staff for a single dormitory unit (Dormitory Counselor II) or two-or-more dormitory units (Dormitory Counselor III); and (d) receptive and expressive signing skills.

This paper addresses the sign skills component of these qualifications. More specifically, the use of the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) to assess the sign communicative competence of applicants for LSD dormitory counselor positions is discussed. Topics included in this discussion are: (a) selection and description of the SLPI, (b) selection and training of LSD personnel to conduct the SLPI, (c) SLPI methodology used with LSD dormitory counselor applicants, and (d) establishment of SLPI standards for LSD dormitory counselor positions.

### SELECTION OF THE SLPI

In April, 1982, the first two authors of this paper were invited by the LSD Coordinator of Sign Language/Interpreting Services (SL/IS) (third author of this paper) to present a workshop on assessment of sign communication skills at LSD. A paper that provided an overview of important factors and approaches to assessment of these skills was prepared and presented to LSD administrative and student life/dormitory personnel in May, 1982 (Cacca-

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Language (ASL) and assessment of general, natural signing communication skills as described in Newell et al. (in press). Therefore, when the SCPI is used for assessment of (only) ASL communicative competence, a colon followed by "ASL" should be added to the scale title (i.e., *SCPI Rating Scale: ASL*), and when the SCPI is used for assessment of general, natural signing communicative competence, a colon followed by the word "General" should be added to the scale title (i.e., *SCPI Rating Scale: General*). Participants agreed the renamed scale (SCPI) is applicable to ASL and general, natural signing communication skills. (Note: See Newell et al., in press, for a discussion of the LPI.)

(Note: The above meeting was organized by Mary Mosleh, College of Staten Island, and was held at Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J., July 31 - August 2, 1983. In addition to Mary Mosleh, other participants in this meeting were: Keitha Boardman, Frank Caccamise, and William Newell from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf; Ted Supalla, University of Illinois; Catherine Moses and Will Madsen, Gallaudet College; William Tomes, South Carolina Personnel Division, and Carol Lazorisak and William R. Gut, College of Staten Island.)

mise & Newell, 1982). Also, three LSD Cottage Parent volunteers were administered pilot SLPIs, and their reaction to these pilot assessments were discussed. Based on the above process, Dr. Harvey J. Corson, Superintendent, LSD, approved the recommendation of his staff that the SLPI be selected for assessing the sign communication skills of LSD dormitory counselor position applicants.

The basic reasons for selecting the SLPI were: (a) this test directly assesses receptive and expressive skills in using sign for communication; (b) it is a flexible test in that its content may vary in accordance with interests, skills, and communication needs of persons taking this test; and (c) because of the latter, it provides a relatively non-threatening, comfortable test situation for candidates.

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE SLPI

Newell, Caccamise, Boardman, and Ray Holcomb (in press) provided information about the SLPI, including in their discussion: (a) an overview of the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI)/Oral Proficiency Interview, the test from which the SLPI was adapted; (b) a rationale and description for the SLPI, including the SLPI Rating Scale (Table I); (c) linguistic and cultural factors important to the assessment of sign communicative competence; and (d) assessment of simultaneous communication skills.

**Table 1**  
Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale\*

| <b>Ratings</b> | <b>Functional Descriptors</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Superior Plus  | Able to use all aspects of signing fluently and accurately to discuss in depth a variety of topics, including social, work, current events, religious, etc. Has complete fluency such that signing on all levels is fully accepted by highly skilled native signers, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, grammar, colloquialisms, accent/production, and cultural references. |
| Superior       | Able to use sign vocabulary and grammar fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to social and work needs. Comprehension (sign reception) is excellent and can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations. Able to negotiate, persuade, counsel, and tailor language to audience.                                                                                     |
| Advanced Plus  | Able to sometimes use grammar, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge in ways consistent with superior/superior plus signers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Advanced       | Able to sign with sufficient grammatical accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on social and work topics. Comprehen-                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | sion is good, vocabulary is broad, grammar is good, and errors seldom interfere with understanding and rarely disturb native signers. Able to handle unfamiliar topics, hypothesize, and provide supported opinion.                                                                                                                                             |
| Intermediate Plus | Able to satisfy with confidence most social demands and work situations. Good control of general everyday sign vocabulary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Intermediate      | Able to satisfy with some confidence routine social demands and limited work requirements. Demonstrates use of some sign grammatical features in connected discourse. Able to narrate and describe topics related to background, family, interests/hobbies, work, travel, and current events, although groping for some everyday sign vocabulary still evident. |
| Survival Plus     | Able to satisfy most survival needs in social <i>and</i> work situations. Can use most question forms and shows beginning of other sign grammatical features. Able to engage in simple conversations within a limited range of topics.                                                                                                                          |
| Survival          | Able to satisfy basic survival needs in social <i>or</i> work situations. Can ask and answer basic questions and has some skills in creating sign utterances based on learned sign vocabulary. Can get into, through, and out of simple survival situations.                                                                                                    |
| Novice Plus       | Able to use connected sign utterances for learned/memorized sign phrases, with most or all utterances related to everyday social question/topic areas, such as names of family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time.                                                                                                            |
| Novice            | Basically limited to single sign utterances with vocabulary primarily related to everyday social, question/topic areas such as names of family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time.                                                                                                                                            |
| <u>0</u>          | No functional skills in signing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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<sup>a</sup>As indicated in footnote 1, in the future this scale will be labelled the *Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI) Rating Scale*.

The SLPI is a direct, integrative test of sign communicative competence in which the candidate/interviewee is interviewed in a conversational format by a proficient signer (Newell et al., in press). The SLPI is a single test method with an infinite number of forms since the content or topics discussed during an interview may be varied for each candidate. Each candidate's performance is videotaped and subsequently rated independently by one or more raters skilled in SLPI methodology. The basis for rating candidates' performance is the SLPI Rating Scale (Table 1), a predetermined, standard scale based on an "ideal" or educated/knowledgeable native or native-like signer.

### SELECTION AND TRAINING OF LSD PERSONNEL

The first two authors of this paper submitted a proposal to LSD administration that: (a) outlined the schedule for a five day SLPI training workshop, (b) listed guidelines for selecting LSD personnel to participate in this training, and (c) identified activities for selected LSD personnel to perform in preparation for the workshop. This proposal led to: (a) the selection of nine LSD staff, who are proficient signers, to participate in the workshop;<sup>2</sup> (b) the reading of selected articles on the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) by these nine people; and (c) the development of questions and situations suggested by these nine people for inclusion in SLPIs for dormitory counselor applicants (see Appendices A and B). These questions and situations were included in a detailed outline prepared for use by the nine LSD participants during the five day SLPI training workshop (Newell & Caccamise, 1982). Sample SLPI videotapes were also selected for demonstration.

Selection of persons within the same program or geographical area to serve as SLPI interviewers and raters helps to ensure that interviews reflect those skills needed to communicate effectively in the program/area for which the interviews are conducted. This also eliminates the fears and frustrations that often arise when persons whose skills are being assessed feel they are being tested by "outsiders". Criteria used by LSD for selection of the nine SLPI interviewers/raters included: (a) highly proficient signer, (b) non-threatening, cordial personality, (c) work experience and/or knowledge about residence hall living and LSD students, (d) both hearing-impaired and hearing persons, and (e) both females and males.

The schedule for the five day workshop, conducted the week of October 25-29, 1982, was:

1. Day 1: (a) History and description of the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI); (b) rationale and description of the adaptation of the LPI for assessing sign communicative competence (SLPI); (c) viewing, rating, and critiquing of videotaped sample SLPIs; (d) practice interviewing, rating, and critiquing of live SLPIs by workshop participants, and (e) establishment of tentative SLPI proficiency rating level standards for LSD dormitory counselor positions.
2. Mornings of Days 2 through 5: Interviewing and rating of SLPIs for LSD dormitory counselor applicants.

<sup>2</sup>The nine LSD people selected were: Mike Aquila, Student Life/Dormitory Staff; Juliette Hynes, Speech Pathologist; Marilyn Mitchell-Caccamise, Coordinator, Sign Language/Interpreting Services (SL/IS); Barry Critchfield, Psychologist, Statewide Assessment Center; Kenneth David, Educational Interpreter, SL/IS; Ray Parks, Director of the Student Center; William Prickett, Dean of Students; Connie Tullos, Instructor, High School Department; and Ed Wood, Instructor, High School Department. The authors wish to extend their appreciation to these LSD staff members for their contributions to the information and process reported in this article, and to Dr. Harvey Corson, Superintendent of LSD, for his support of this project.

3. Afternoons of Days 2 through 5: (a) completion of rating SLPIs conducted in mornings; (b) discussion of interviewing and rating techniques and skills; (c) development and revision of SLPI information sheets and forms; (d) completion of recommendations on continued/further use of the SLPI at LSD; and (e) discussion of the latter at the end of the fifth afternoon with the Superintendent of LSD.

### **SLPI METHODOLOGY FOR LSD DORMITORY COUNSELOR APPLICANTS**

#### **Pre-Interview Procedures**

SLPI procedural information and tips for candidates (see Appendices C & D) were distributed to LSD dormitory/student life personnel and the authors of this paper met with interested student life personnel to discuss and respond to questions about the SLPI the week prior to the October 25-29 workshop. During this period student life personnel signed-up for a 45 minute interview time during the week of October 25-29, with preference given based on seniority of service at LSD.

#### **Interviews**

Each candidate was seen individually for an SLPI by a single LSD interviewer in one room of a two-room recording studio at LSD, with all interviews videotaped using a split screen format. The candidate and interviewer sat facing each other, with the two cameras placed as inconspicuously as possible to the side walls of the studio. All other recording equipment was placed and controlled in the studio room adjacent to the interview room. The procedures followed for interviews were: (a) interviewer greeted candidate at interview room door and walked with candidate to the seating area; (b) when the candidate was comfortably seated the interviewer shared a printed sheet containing the SLPI procedural information for candidates (Appendix C), gave the candidate time to read this sheet, summarized the procedural information, and answered any candidate questions; (c) when the candidate indicated s/he was ready to begin the interview, the interviewer placed the procedural information sheet on the floor, signalling the person in the control room to begin the videotape recording equipment; and (d) the four phases of the interview (warm-up, level check, probes, and wind-down) were conducted. (See Newell et al., in press, for a description of these four interview phases.) At the conclusion of the "wind-down" each candidate was thanked for her/his cooperation.

#### **Rating Interviews and Reporting Results**

The following procedures were used for rating interviews and reporting these ratings: (a) videotaped interviews shown to all LSD workshop partici-

pants except for the participant conducting the next interview; (b) participants independently rated each interview; (c) participants and the two workshop leaders tabulated and discussed the assigned rating(s); (d) an agreed upon SLPI rating was assigned to each candidate; and (e) the assigned rating was reported to appropriate LSD personnel and shared with each candidate. Except for the latter, all procedures were completed for 20 applicants during the workshop week.

During the workshop week several alternatives for reporting and sharing SLPI results were discussed. Based on these discussions two forms were developed, an SLPI Raters' Form (Appendix E) and an SLPI Report of Results for Candidate form (Appendix F). The Raters' Form includes the SLPI rating assigned to each candidate and signatures of all raters. The originals of both forms were sent to the LSD Personnel Office, and copies were sent to the LSD Superintendent, the Dean of Students, and the Coordinator, SL/IS. Both of these forms and an SLPI Rating Scale were also shared with candidates at an individual meeting for each candidate with her/his interviewer within two weeks of the interview. The purposes of these meetings were to report the SLPI rating assigned and discuss the rationale for this rating with each candidate. If candidates wished to discuss in depth how they could improve their sign communicative competence and/or view their interview videotapes, separate meetings with a skilled instructor of sign language were recommended. Following the meeting between each candidate and interviewer, the Coordinator of SL/IS sent each candidate a copy of the SLPI Raters' Form (Appendix E) and a letter that included the candidate's SLPI rating and information for optional follow-up (Appendix H).

Opportunities for improving skills is an important follow-up for communication assessment programs. Therefore, recommendations made at the completion of the LSD workshop included SLPI candidates' options for improving sign communication skills. Two suggested options included: (a) to have dormitory counselors with Advanced and above SLPI ratings serve as sign instructors/tutors for other dormitory personnel, and (b) a recommended selection of sign language and deaf culture instructional materials that may be used for self-instruction (Appendix G).

### **Process for Subsequent Interviews**

As previously stated, during the workshop week 20 dormitory counselor applicants received SLPIs. Because there were 84 LSD Cottage Parents at the time that this communication assessment program was initiated, a process needed to be planned and implemented to provide these and other dormitory counselor applicants the opportunity to receive an SLPI assessment. Based on experiences gained during the workshop week and LSD resources, the following process was implemented for administering SLPIs to dormitory counselor applicants: (a) schedule four LSD personnel trained in SLPI

procedures to conduct 8 SLPIs for dormitory counselor applicants on a specified day each month, with one person conducting an interview while the other three trained personnel rate videotaped interviews; (b) procedures for interviewing, rating, and reporting results same as previously stated in this section except for number of raters; and (c) above process coordinated by the Coordinator of SL/IS.

Appendix I and the next section of this paper ("Establishment of SLPI Standards for LSD Dormitory Counselor Positions") discuss the criteria for SLPI raters' agreement at LSD. As indicated in Appendix I, a second or reinterview may be approved for a candidate if raters are unable to reach an agreed upon rating and/or the candidate is dissatisfied with the interview. Also, and related to this, a second interview may be approved if raters believe the interview did not allow the candidate to demonstrate consistently her/his highest sign proficiency level. Appendix J provides a checklist for evaluating the technique used by interviewers when conducting SLPIs.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF SLPI STANDARDS FOR LSD DORMITORY COUNSELOR POSITIONS

At the time this paper was written, 42 LSD dormitory counselor applicants had received SLPIs. The average time for these interviews was approximately 25 minutes with a range of 15 to 35 minutes. The number and percentage of applicants receiving each SLPI rating level is shown in Table 2. The question that now needed to be answered was: "What SLPI rating level should be the minimal sign proficiency level for each LSD dormitory counselor position?"

**Table 2**

Results of Sign Language Proficiency Interviews (SLPIs) Conducted with  
Louisiana School for the Deaf Dormitory Counselor Applicants (N=42)

| SLPI Ratings      | Number (%) Receiving<br>This Rating | SLPI Ratings                | Number (%) Receiving<br>This Rating |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Superior Plus     | 3 ( 7.1)                            | Survival Plus               | 3 (7.1)                             |
| Superior          | 7 (16.7)                            | Survival                    | 3 (7.1)                             |
| Advanced Plus     | 6 (14.3)                            | Novice Plus                 | 1 (2.4)                             |
| Advanced          | 8 (19.0)                            | Novice                      | 1 (2.4)                             |
| Intermediate Plus | 2 ( 4.8)                            | 0 (No Functional<br>Skills) | 0                                   |
| Intermediate      | 8 (19.0)                            |                             |                                     |

Livingston (1978), in a report on the establishment of LPI standards by the New Jersey Department of Education for Spanish-English bilingual teachers and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, stressed that two possible



error types need to be considered when establishing competency or proficiency standards. These two error types are: (a) a candidate meeting proficiency standards who *is not* qualified for a job or program, and (b) a candidate not meeting proficiency standards who *is* qualified for a job or program.

Considering the above two possible error types and the qualifications and responsibilities of LSD dormitory counselors, LSD workshop participants established the following tentative SLPI proficiency level standards on the first day of the workshop: (a) Intermediate rating for Dormitory Counselor I, (b) Advanced rating for Dormitory Counselor II, and (c) Superior rating for Dormitory Counselor III. Based on workshop experiences, including the ratings received by the first 20 candidates, the above standards were modified on the final day of the workshop to: (a) Intermediate for Dormitory Counselor I, (b) Advanced for Dormitory Counselor II, and (c) Advanced (minimal) and Superior (preferred) for Dormitory Counselor III.

Following the administration and rating of an additional 22 SLPIs (see Table 2), the LSD Superintendent and nine workshop participants met to discuss the qualifications and responsibilities of the LSD dormitory counselor positions and the ratings for the 42 applicants that had received SLPIs. Based on this discussion the SLPI standards recommended on the final day of the workshop were approved as the criteria for LSD dormitory counselor positions. Given this criteria, Table 2 shows that 34 (81.0%) of the 42 LSD applicants satisfied the SLPI communicative competence criteria for Dormitory Counselor positions, with 10 (23.8%) satisfying the criterion for Dormitory Counselor I and 24 (57.2%) satisfying the criteria for Dormitory Counselor II and III.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The use of the SLPI to assess the sign communicative competence of LSD dormitory counselor applicants has been discussed. The SLPI provides an assessment methodology that: (a) directly assesses receptive and expressive skills in using sign for communication; (b) is flexible since interview content/topics may vary in accordance with interests, skills, and communication needs of test candidates; (c) emphasizes what a communicator *can do*, and (d) allows persons within a program/geographical area to conduct assessment interview and their ratings, thus helping to ensure that interviews truly reflect those skills needed to effectively communicate in a program/geographical area.

Due to the success and benefits gained from use of the SLPI with dormitory counselor applicants, LSD personnel are considering the use of this communication assessment methodology with teachers, administrators, students, and others at LSD.

In conclusion, the use of the SLPI, as described in this paper, provides an

appropriate approach to assessing the receptive and expressive signing skills of LSD dormitory counselor applicants. With similar care in planning, training of personnel, and implementation, the SLPI may provide a valuable tool for other programs seeking to improve the quality of services available to students and, therefore, the development and learning of students. As stressed by Newell et al. (in press), further investigations may also demonstrate similar benefits in applying Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) methodology to assessment of deaf and hard-of-hearing students/clients spoken language communicative competence.

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## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE SLPI QUESTIONS FOR LSD DORMITORY COUNSELOR APPLICANTS

- TYPE 1: YES/NO QUESTIONS**
- Are you from Baton Rouge?
  - Do you work on South Campus?
  - Are you a dormitory counselor?
  - Do you have many meetings?

**TYPE 2: CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Do you prefer day work or night work?  
 Do you work with another cottage parent or alone?  
 Which are more difficult, home-going or school-returning procedures?

**TYPE 3: POLITE REQUESTS**

Please tell me about your job here.  
 Please tell me about your family.  
 Please tell me about home-going procedures.  
 Please explain how you handle a child who won't obey.

**TYPE 4: INFORMATION QUESTIONS**

What is your name?  
 Who is your supervisor?  
 When did you start working at LSD?  
 Where were you born?  
 Which age student do you enjoy working with?  
 What rules are students required to follow/obey in the dorms?  
 What reasons would lead to a student being suspended?  
 What activities are/should be available to students after class hours/outside of class?  
 What kind of field trips do students enjoy most?

**TYPE 5: CANDIDATE QUESTIONS INTERVIEWER**

Please ask me some questions now.  
 Do you have any questions for me?  
 Now you find out about my background.

**TYPE 6: REPHRASING QUESTIONS**

How do you notify the school when a student is sick?  
 Rephrased: When a student is sick who do you tell in the school?  
 Who is responsible for administering medication to students?  
 Rephrased: Can you give medicine to students?

**TYPE 7: HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS**

If a student refuses to obey you what back up do you have?  
 What would you like to be doing 5 years from now?  
 If you could change anything about your work situation, what would it be?

**TYPE 8: DESCRIPTIVE PRELUDE**

I learned sign language as a youngster from my parents. We lived in New Orleans and my older sister and I were born deaf. Explain to me how you became interested in working with the deaf.  
 Often children will return to school after a short weekend or vacation at home and they will be very upset. Please tell me how you handle this and what kinds of help does LSD provide to students regarding their own family problems.

**TYPE 9: CANDIDATE PROMPTED QUESTIONS**

Oh really, when were you there?  
 That's interesting, can you tell me more about that?  
 Why?  
 Do you make that food often?

**TYPE 10: SUPPORTED OPINION QUESTIONS**

Most types of questions can be supported opinion with the addition of "WHY" or "WHY DO YOU THINK THAT?"  
 Why do you think schools for deaf students provide more social interaction than

- mainstream programs?
- Why are after school activities important for students?
- What forms of praise/criticism or reward/punishment works best with the students?
- Which rules do students rebel against most? Why?
- What information about the dorms is most important for parents? Why?
- What information should be shared between teachers and dormitory personnel/dorm counselors?

NOTE: The manner in which the above questions are signed may vary in accordance with the skills and communication needs of the candidate/interviewee. See Newell et al. (in press) for further discussion of this.

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE SLPI SITUATIONS FOR LSD DORMITORY COUNSELOR APPLICANTS

#### FAMILIAR SITUATIONS

1. You meet a parent:
  - a. Say hello and ask how s/he is
  - b. Make an appointment to see her/him this week
  - c. Tell her/him that you would like to discuss a problem you are having with her/his child I will play the part of the parent.
2. You are interviewing a part-time cottage parent. You want to know:
  - a. Her/his age
  - b. Her/his address
  - c. Her/his previous experience
  - d. Her/his interest in the LSD dorm work
3. You have an appointment with a parent. You tell her/him the following:
  - a. How well her/his son is doing
  - b. What changes in behavior you have seen during the year
  - c. How happy you are that s/he has been able to cooperate with the school

#### FAMILIAR SITUATIONS WITH COMPLICATION

1. You take a male student to the infirmary. Explain to the nurse:
  - a. The student has been complaining of a pain in his stomach
  - b. The student has had this stomach ache since last night when you came on duty
  - c. The student has not vomited
  - d. When the pain really became severe you decided to bring him to the infirmary
2. You are working the nightshift and leave your dorm to check out something suspicious outside. You accidentally lock yourself out. You look for the security guard to tell him:
  - a. How it happened
  - b. Explain that you couldn't see anything suspicious outside
  - c. Ask if he has a master key to let you in
  - d. If he doesn't believe you are an employee of LSD, convince him that you work here
3. You have run out of gas on the highway. A deaf man with a tow truck stops, asks if you need help. Have a conversation with him in which you explain:
  - a. Your car is not in need of repair; you don't want it towed
  - b. You are out of gas and want him to take you to a gas station and then drive you back to your car with the gasoline

- c. Ask him how much he will charge for this (you may have to bargain if the price seems too high)
- d. Ask him if he has a metal can for the gas

#### UNFAMILIAR SITUATIONS

1. You were at the school dance with all the students in your dorm. You return to the dorm and discover that it has been robbed. You call the police to the scene:
  - a. Explain the facts, when you left, when you got back, what you saw
  - b. Explain that a window was broken near the door
  - c. Explain that you think a TV is missing and numerous contents from students' rooms
  - d. Explain to the students that you want them to prepare a list of all the items they are missing
2. A parent comes to school to meet with you. The parent is hearing. You meet with the parent and the student at the same time. You want to explain the following to the parent. Make sure that both the parent and the student understand what is being discussed:
  - a. What are the student's restrictions at home during vacation?
  - b. How does the parent and student get along at home?
  - c. What suggestion does the parent have for convincing the student to cooperate with the rules of the school?
  - d. How is the parent willing to cooperate with the school?

### APPENDIX C

#### SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) PROCEDURES: INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

1. We will have a conversation about social and work topics. I will ask you questions, and you should ask me questions.
  2. We want to get the best sample of your signing skills.
  3. We will evaluate your signing skills, including: (a) sign vocabulary; (b) clarity and control of sign production; (c) use of sign grammar (for example, use of space, sign directionality, and time indicators); (d) fluency or smoothness of sign and fingerspelling production; and (e) comprehension/understanding or skill in receiving signed information.
  4. This interview allows you to demonstrate your highest skill level. There are no trick questions.
  5. Please answer my questions as completely as possible.
  6. I will use only signs when I ask you questions. This is to test your reception for signs alone when there is no speech. Sometimes, however, I may use signs with lip movement or signs with voice.
  7. Please do not use *any* voice; *some* lip movement is OK.
- Do you have any questions? Please use signing to ask them.

### APPENDIX D

#### TIPS FOR CANDIDATES ON HOW TO TAKE A SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) (Adapted from Vera Donskey; In Liskin-Gasparro, 1982)

1. **RELAX:** Sip a cup of coffee, rub your hands, talk about the weather — anything that will help you relax and be confident.
2. **CHOOSE YOUR OWN SIGNING SPEED:** Choose a signing speed that is comfortable

for you. If you know you make more mistakes when you sign too fast, slow down.

3. **USE SHORT SENTENCES:** There is nothing wrong with short sentences. You are in a conversation, not making a public speech. Short, good sentences give the impression of ease, confidence and skill.
4. **KEEP SIGNING:** Don't stop the conversation by signing simply YES or NO. Be generous. Give details, explain your point, develop your thoughts, and make comparisons. Anything that shows you can discuss a topic in depth will help you perform better. If you are not a "talkative" person by nature, you must make an extra effort to communicate during the interview.
5. **DON'T AVOID GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES:** You may be asked what you would do if you had a million dollars. Explain what you would do if you can. This may improve your level of performance. The interviewer is probably trying to determine if you are able to use a specific grammatical structure.
6. **DON'T DOWNGRADE YOURSELF:** Don't apologize for your signing skills. Be positive. Let the interview show your skills.

#### WHAT TO DO . . .

1. **IF YOU THINK YOU UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS ASKED, BUT ARE NOT SURE:** Respond to what you think you understood. Chances are, you have. Don't request that questions be repeated if it isn't necessary.
2. **IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE:** If you know you made a mistake, correct it and continue. Correcting a mistake can help your performance.
3. **IF YOU ARE LOST IN A LONG SENTENCE:** Stop. Think. Say something like, "Let me tell you again — it is complicated." Then try again. Don't worry about what happened. No one expects you to sign without mistakes. Worrying about a mistake reduces your efficiency, and may hurt your performance during the interview.
4. **IF YOU BECOME NERVOUS DURING THE INTERVIEW:** The interviewer will know you are nervous and help you. You can stop for a few seconds and get control. Relax. Admit that you are nervous and joke about it. Often this is enough to make you comfortable again.
5. **IF SOMETHING IS INTERFERING WITH YOUR SIGNING:** If the air conditioner bothers you, say so. If you can't see the interviewer clearly, say so. Remember that this is your interview. You should have the best possible interview conditions.
6. **IF YOU ARE ASKED A QUESTION YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT:** Say so and explain why you are not familiar with or not interested in the topic. Remember, we are not interested in *what* you know as much as in *how* you communicate on topics you do know about.
7. **IF YOU FEEL, "OH BOY! THIS IS REALLY EASY":** If you feel the interview is too easy, you are probably not demonstrating your highest level of skill/proficiency. This is a good time to use idioms you know well. Try to sign on a higher level.
8. **IF YOU FEEL, "OH! THIS IS GETTING ROUGH":** If you feel the interview is becoming difficult, it is normal. You are near the sign skill level where you begin to feel the pressure. The interviewer cannot judge your highest level unless you are asked to go beyond it.

**APPENDIX E**

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RATERS' FORM**

CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

SLPI RATING \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

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**RATERS' SIGNATURES**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

### SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) REPORT OF RESULTS FOR CANDIDATE

CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SLPI INTERVIEW DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE, TIME & PLACE OF MEETING FOR REPORTING RESULTS TO CANDIDATE:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BASED ON YOUR SLPI YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SIGN PROFICIENCY RATING OF

\_\_\_\_\_

THE SLPI RATING SCALE IS ATTACHED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.  
PLEASE READ THE ATTACHED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DISCUSS  
THEM DURING YOUR MEETING TODAY.  
YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED NOTIFICA-  
TION OF THE SLPI RATING GIVEN TO YOU.

CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SLPI INTERVIEWER/RATER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### A RECOMMENDED SELECTION OF SIGN LANGUAGE AND DEAF CULTURE MATERIALS

- I. Source: Special Materials Project (SMP), 624 E. Walnut St., Suite 223, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204
  - A. *Survival Vocabulary Videotapes* (J. Ryan et al.)
    1. Survival Vocabulary, Phrases, and Sentences: These VTs demonstrate several features of signing, including how to ask questions, the signing space, the time line, expressing plurality, incorporation of time and number in noun signs, verb tense, and use of space and sign directionality.
    2. Manual English, Basic Level Skills
  - B. *Technical Sign Videotapes & Manuals* (F. Caccamise et al.)
    1. VTs demonstrate signs used in academic and career environments: Anthropology, Biology, Business, Career Education, Catholic Religion, Communication (Speech Pathology & Audiology), Engineering, English, Fine & Applied Arts, Human Sexuality, Mathematics, Secretarial, etc. (VTs available for purchase and on free loan basis)
    2. Manuals
      - a. *Manual 1* provides overview of project, including sign vocabulary on all VTs and use of VTs, 1982



- b. *Manual 2* describes the diagram/movement symbol system selected for representing signs in subsequent manuals. 1982
  - c. Subsequent manuals have diagrams of signs on VTs, with one technical area per manual:
    - 1) *Manual 3: Mathematics*, 1982
    - 2) *Manual 4: Communication*, 1983
    - 3) *Manual 5: Career Education*, 1983
    - 4) *Manual 6: English*, 1983
    - 5) (Two Additional Manuals are Planned for Development & Distribution Each Year)
  - 3. All Skill Levels
  - C. *Off Hand Tales*
    - 1. VTs of signed stories related to Deaf culture
    - 2. Pidgin Sign English, Intermediate to Advanced Skill Levels
- II. Source: National Association of the Deaf, 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910
- A. *I Want to Talk* (H. Hoemann)
    - 1. VT of one child's signing in response to questions such as "What did you get for your birthday?"
    - 2. Accompanying manual provides translations and grammatical notes
    - 3. Childrenehse/PSE, Intermediate to Advanced Skill Levels
  - B. Computer Terminology Sign Videotapes (3)
  - C. Books/Journals/Papers on Culture Include:
    - 1. J. Gannon, *Deaf Heritage*
    - 2. *Deaf American*
    - 3. *The Broadcaster*
    - 4. T. Spradley & J. Bradley, *Deaf Like Me*
    - 5. L. Jacobs, *A Deaf Adult Speaks Out*
    - 6. H. Furth, *Deafness and Learning: A Psychosocial Approach*
    - 7. R. Battison & C. Baker, *Sign Language and the Deaf Community*
    - 8. B.L. Benderly, *Dancing Without Music*
    - 9. J. Greenberg, *In This Sign*
    - 10. E. Mindel & M. Vernon, *They Grow in Silence*
    - 11. Proceedings of 1977, 1978, & 1980 *National Symposiums on Sign Language Research and Teaching*
  - D. Sign Language Books Include:
    - 1. L. Reikehof, *Joy of Signing*
    - 2. T.J. O'Rourke, *A basic course in manual communication*
    - 3. T.J. O'Rourke, *A basic vocabulary of ASL for parents and children*
    - 4. M. Sternberg, *American Sign Language*
    - 5. W. Madsen, *Intermediate Sign Language II* (1982 edition)
    - 6. J. Woodward, *Signs for drug use*
    - 7. J. Woodward, *Signs for sexual behavior*
    - 8. G. Gustason et al., *Signing Exact English* (1980 edition)
    - 9. H. Bornstein, *Gallaudet Preschool Signed English series*
    - 10. C. Baker & D. Cokely American Sign Language Series
      - a. *Teacher's Resource Text on Grammar and Culture*
      - b. *Teacher's Resource Text on Curriculum, Methods, and Evaluation*
      - c. *Student Text*

11. H. Hoemann, *American Sign Language: Lexical and Grammatical Notes with Translation Exercises*
  12. W. Newell (Project Director), *Basic Sign Communication: Teacher's Guide: I, II, III*, 1983 (Sign language curriculum for developing basic Pidgin Sign English skills; includes detailed instructional strategies for sign vocabulary, sign grammatical features, and information about deaf culture)
  13. W. Newell (Project Director), *Basic Sign Communication: Vocabulary*, 1983, and *Basic Sign Communication: Students Materials*, 1983
- III. Source: T.J. Publishers, 817 Silver Spring Avenue, Suite 305-D, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910
- A. Books Include:
1. E. Hairston & L. Smith, *Black and Deaf in America*
  2. C. Baker & R. Battison, *Sign Language and the Deaf Community: Essays in Honor of William Stokoe*
  3. R.F. Panara, J.E. Panara, & K. Mulholland, *Great Deaf Americans*
  4. C. Baker & D. Cokely, *American Sign Language Series*
  5. J. Woodward, *How You Gonna Get to Heaven if You Can't Talk with Jesus: On Depathologizing Deafness*
- B. Videotapes: Three tapes of American Sign Language designed to be used with the C. Baker and D. Cokely *American Sign Language Student Text*
- IV. Source: Gallaudet College Press, Distribution Office, Kendall Green, Washington, D.C., 20002
- A. *Handful of Tales*
1. VTs of signed stories related to deaf culture
  2. Pidgin Sign English (PSE) & ASL; Intermediate to Advanced Skill Levels
- B. *Wanna See ASL Stories*
1. VTs of signed stories related to deaf culture
  2. Basic to Advanced ASL Skill Levels
- V. Sources: Other
- A. Caccamise, F. (Ed.) Sign language and simultaneous communication: Linguistic, psychological, and instructional ramifications. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 1978, 123 (7), 797-902.
- B. L. Reikehof. *Joy of Signing*
1. VTs that include demonstration of signs in isolation and sentences (PSE, Basic Skill Level)
  2. Source: Joy Enterprises, P.O. Box 580, Dumfries, Virginia, 22026
- C. F. Caccamise & C. Norris Sign Books
1. Sign books for hearing-impaired children, their families, and friends; also, sign booklet for baby sitters and hospital setting and a fold-out wallet size card for law enforcement officials
  2. Source: Alinda Press, P.O. Box 553, Eureka, CA, 95501
- D. *Silent Perspective Services:*
1. VTs related to deaf culture; topics include:
    - a. Lou Fant: Interview, poems, songs
    - b. Lou Fant: Two Stories (Supergronda, Jabberwocky)
    - c. Interpreters (songs in signs)
    - d. Deaf Humor: A Play on Words

- e. Theatre of the Deaf: Bernard Bragg, Robert Panara, Betti Bonni, & Paul Johnston discuss and demonstrate aspects of theatre and the deaf
  - 2. Source: DEAF Media, 4559 Fieldbrook Rd., Oakland, CA, 94619
- E. An Evening on Deafness: This program, which was presented over public educational television in Maryland, consists of three one-hour videotapes. The information on these tapes cuts across a number of topics:
- 1. *Tape 1*
    - a. "Listen": Causes of hearing loss (aging, noise exposure, etc.) (10-545)
    - b. Several hearing-impaired people answer the question, "Do you feel handicapped?" (546-626)
    - c. Causes of hearing loss
    - d. Parents answer question, "How did you first learn about your child's hearing loss?"
    - e. Curing hearing loss: Conductive versus sensorineural hearing loss
    - f. Percentage of people with hearing loss
    - g. "We Tiptoed Around Whispering": Includes parent interviews, in which parents discuss their feelings about a "deaf child." Also, emphasizes lack of knowledge about deafness and hearing-impaired people (deaf and hard-of-hearing) by many professionals (pediatricians, etc.) (798-893 on Tape 1, and 0-278 on Tape 2)
  - 2. *Tape 2:*
    - a. "We Tiptoed Around Whispering": (continued) (0-278)
    - b. Parents' reaction to "deafness" (279-400)
    - c. Organizations Serving the Deaf (401-500)
    - d. Heredity and Hearing Loss (500-515)
    - e. Mental Retardation and Deafness (516-525)
    - f. Parents answer the question, "Why do you sign?"
    - g. "Total Communication": Description of Total Communication as practiced at the Maryland School for the Deaf
  - 3. *Tape 3:*
    - a. On Manual Communication (0-25)
    - b. Discussion of Total Communication (25-392)
    - c. "Swan Lake": Interviews with young hearing-impaired people, including feelings about family relationships, goals for the future, etc.
    - 4. Source: Total Communication Lab, Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland, 21157
- F. E. Harford, *How they hear* (record)
- 1. Explains loudness, intensity, pitch, frequency, and an audiogram on which hearing test results are recorded; and simulates a number of hearing losses
  - 2. Source: Gordon N. Stowe & Associates, P.O. Box 233-a, Northbrook, Illinois, 60062

## VI. GENERAL BOOKS ON MATERIALS & SOURCES

- A. Harrington, T. *Mediography on deafness and the deaf*. ERIC Document Reproduction Services, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA, 22210, No. Ed 169721.
- B. Federlin, T. *A comprehensive bibliography on American Sign Language: A resource manual*. New York: 106 MacDougal Street, 1979 (also, available for NAD).

## APPENDIX H

### LETTER FROM COORDINATOR, SIGN LANGUAGE/INTERPRETING SERVICES, LSD, TO SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW CANDIDATES

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Congratulations! Through the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) procedure for evaluating sign language/communication skills, you have received a rating of \_\_\_\_\_. Your SLPI rating has been discussed with you by the person who interviewed you. Enclosed is a copy of the results.

If you have any questions or concerns about the interview or the rating or if you wish to see your interview videotape, please contact me for an appointment at 342-6388 or 342-6387 (V or TDD).

Again, congratulations and best of luck.

Sincerely,  
Marilyn Mitchell-Caccamise, Coordinator  
Sign Language/Interpreting Services

MMC:lmo

cc: Dr. Corson  
S. Martin  
B. Prickett  
file

## APPENDIX I

### CRITERIA FOR SLPI RATERS' AGREEMENT: LSD DORMITORY COUNSELOR POSITIONS

The following rater agreement guidelines provide less stringent requirements within rating level ranges that *do not* cut across SLPI rating standards for LSD dormitory counselor positions (#I below), than within rating level ranges that *do* cut across these standards (#II below).

- I. For SLPI rating levels *0 through Survival and Advanced Plus through Superior Plus*, a minimum of two raters must agree, with the third rating within one level (e.g., two ratings of Survival and one rating of Novice Plus); the rating of the two raters in agreement is the rating given the candidate. If agreement cannot be reached, two new ratings by other SLPI personnel should be obtained; a minimum of four exact ratings is then necessary for agreement. If agreement still not reached, another interview should be scheduled for the candidate.
- II. For SLPI rating levels *Survival Plus through Advanced*, all three raters must agree on the same rating. If agreement cannot be reached, two new ratings by other SLPI personnel should be obtained; a minimum of four exact ratings is then necessary for agreement. If agreement still not reached, another interview should be scheduled for the candidate.

| SLPI Rating Levels                                   | Rater Agreement Criteria                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1A. Superior Plus<br>B. Superior<br>C. Advanced Plus | If 3 raters, 2 of 3 in exact agreement<br>& 3rd within one rating level; if 5<br>raters, 4 in exact agreement |
| 2A. Advanced<br>B. Intermediate Plus                 | If 3 raters, exact agreement for all 3;<br>if 5 raters, 4 in exact agreement                                  |

- C. Intermediate
- D. Survival Plus
- 3A. Survival
- B. Novice Plus
- C. Novice
- D. 0

Same criteria as for group 1 SLPI  
rating levels (see above)

## APPENDIX J

### SLPI CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE

(Adapted from Liskin-Gasparro, 1982)

INTERVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_

SLPI RATING \_\_\_\_\_

The interviewer's job is to get the candidate to sign at the highest functional level for as long as possible. The overall atmosphere should be relaxed, but there must be times when the interviewer pushes the candidate beyond her/his limits.

The following questions can serve as a guide either when you observe another interviewer's performance or when you yourself are interviewing/rating.

1. How did the interviewer test for different levels?
  - a. Could you easily spot where the level check began? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Could you easily spot where the levels shifted? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Did the interviewer stay on a low level too long? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Did the interviewer take the candidate high enough? How did the interviewer do it?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Where did the candidate break? \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. In what way did the candidate break? \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Did the interviewer jump back down to a low level after the examinee experienced difficulty on a higher level? \_\_\_\_\_  
What was the highest level? \_\_\_\_\_  
Back to what lower level? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did the interviewer test the candidate's skills in:
 

|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
|  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--|------------|-----------|

  - a. Answering questions?
  - b. Asking questions?
  - c. Narrating events or describe a person or place?

- d. Narrating events or describe a person or place in detail?
  - e. Using everyday signing?
  - f. Using slang and idiomatic phrases?
  - g. Using high-level vocabulary and construction?
3. Did the interviewer give away the answer, part of it, or provide a set of alternatives to choose from?
  4. Did the interviewer pursue a topic in which the candidate had no interest?