

PEPNet-Northeast and
LaGuardia Community College/CUNY:
A presentation on

**Distance Learning Developmental
English Classes for Deaf and Hard-
of-Hearing Postsecondary Students**



With
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July 15, 2010
PEPNet-AHEAD Conference
Denver, Colorado

An Overview

- Purpose of this collaborative project
- Address unique English learning issues of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing adults
- Logistics for implementing distance learning courses for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing adults
- Adapting distance learning technologies
- Discussion of the implications in measuring success, i.e., impact on student learning progress, technology effectiveness and collaborative partnerships

Purpose

- To provide distance learning English courses with an emphasis on developmental reading and writing skills for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing adults in remote areas via videoconferencing technologies
- To evaluate the effectiveness of this English Literacy instruction project
- To explore other possible applications of using distance learning technologies

A Collaborative Pilot Project



Between:

- PEPNet-Northeast
- LaGuardia Community College, City University of NY
- Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Brattleboro, VT (Spring 2009)
- Hiram G. Andrews Center, Johnstown, PA (Spring 2010)

Rationale For Pilot Project

- Educational needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals
 - > Living in a rural area
 - > Benefiting from qualified and trained instructor fluent in ASL
 - > Able to commit oneself to improve writing and reading skills for vocational and academic advancement



An initial collaboration in Winter 2007

- Between LaGuardia and University of Maine System in Augusta, Maine
- Funding was made possible through the Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation, granted to Barbara Keefe, Maine's PEPNet outreach specialist
- A 20-hour course in Job Readiness and English Literacy Skills for 3 Deaf adults in Maine



Effective pedagogical practice of an English Literacy class for Deaf Adults in a distance learning project

Overview of curricula of Continuing Education Reading and Writing classes for Deaf Adults based on TABE Reading Placement Test and National Reporting System's Literacy levels:

- 1) Beginning Basic Education I & II (BBE 1 & BBE 2)
- 2) Intermediate Basic Education (IBE)

Beginning Basic Education I & II

◎ **Reading Placement:**

- > Adult Basic Education Test (TABE)
 - BBE 1: Between 2nd to 3rd reading grade
 - BBE 2: Between 3rd to 4th reading grade

◎ **Curriculum:** High interest readings

- > Novels and non-fiction anthologies
- > Personal essays based on readings
- > Light grammar



Intermediate Basic Education

◎ **Curriculum used for VT & PA projects**

◎ **Reading Placement:**

- > Adult Basic Education Test (TABE)
 - ABOVE 4th grade level



◎ **Curriculum included:**

- > Guide questions and vocabulary work
- > One full-length novel or short-essay collection
- > Text-based essays (modified to include personal experience to support a thesis statement)

Intermediate Basic Education (Cont.)

◎ **Methodology:**

> **Reading**

- 8-10 pages of reading homework with guide questions and vocabulary work
- Back summaries and responses
- Discussion . . . discussion . . . discussion

> **Writing**

- Writing lessons based on student models of writing
- Outlining and drafting
- Response/conferencing
- Revision (x4 x3)

Intermediate Basic Education (Cont.)

◎ **Methodology – Writing (cont.):**

> **Grammar:**

- Exercises that build on one another
- Self-correction guided by symbols at last-draft stage

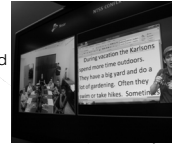
◎ **Exit:**

> **"Cold Reading":**

- Next 8 pages in novel that are read without assistance
- Comprehension questions and vocabulary

> **Writing:**

- Final essay
 - Graded holistically for: introduction, clarity, craft and correctness



Logistics

- ◎ Courses ran for 9 weeks, 2 nights per week, 3 hours each session, for a total of 45 hours
- ◎ Taught by Deaf Continuing Education teacher at LaGuardia Community College
- ◎ PEPNet provided support for consultation, personnel, materials, equipment and technical assistance
- ◎ Specific logistics involved in the set-up of this project, along with pre- and post-testing of students, evaluation activities- and outcome data

Logistics

- The level of English Literacy and instructional content
 - > Determined by assessing students' learning needs using Program for Deaf Adults' TABE reading placement tests and writing essays
- For an effective project, students must possess:
 - > at least 3rd grade reading level (on TABE form M)
 - > basic knowledge of computer and Internet skills
 - > familiarity with communication through videoconferencing technology
 - > access to a computer lab or a laptop during class sessions

Adapting distance learning technologies

- > Two-way interactive event where video and audio is simultaneously transmitted to individuals at sites in different locations.
- > Point to Point connection
 - Between two sites – without a bridge
- > Multipoint connection
 - Individuals located at many sites can see and hear those at all of the other sites - with a bridge
- > IP Videoconferencing (VOIP)
 - Requires the use of Internet and computer specifically set-up for videoconferencing
- > Rule of thumb –
 - Less equipment (bridge) the better resolution
 - Minimum standard speed: 384 (can go up to 512 or 768)

Implementation

- Steps taken:
 - > Candidates identified and screened by the site coordinator or language facilitator
 - > Qualified individuals were invited to participate in the project classes
 - > Based on questionnaires, TABE reading placement and writing essays submitted by candidates, learning needs were assessed
 - > Learning objectives of the classes use the Intermediate Basic English Curriculum

Implementation

- Project and remote coordinators took the following steps:
 - > Schedule hosting site room with IP capacity
 - > Work with the College's IT staff, compare and test the use of equipment
 - > Arrange testing and training between LaGCC and remote sites
 - > Remote site should have a HD Panel (at least 46"), an Eagle Eye zooming remote and an access to laptops
 - > Training provided to teacher on using People on Content (Polycom) and a controlling remote

Orientation and Training

Prior to the offering of a course, teacher and Project Coordinator, along with a PEPNet team, met with Site Coordinator and/or Language Facilitator and IT technician in both Vermont and Pennsylvania



Reports of Project Classes

- **Spring 2009 (Vermont):**
 - Five of six students screened participated with reading levels of between 5th and 10th grades
 - Teaching of Writing was not made possible as there was no access to a laptop at the site; students used PC at their work/home
 - Language facilitator, who can hear, fluent in ASL, is a teacher
- **Spring 2010 (Pennsylvania):**
 - Six of nine students screened participated with 3rd and 5th grade reading levels; most had benefited reading Maus, a graphic novel
 - Grammar was taught using the 10 Steps exercise book
 - IBE Curriculum has been modified to accommodate this group
 - Language facilitator, Gallaudet graduate, works as Living Skills tutor

Recommendations

- Given limited instructional hours provided for both Reading and Writing classes, outcomes are aligned with the 45-hour curriculum; will be tailored to 60 hrs
- Success incorporation of distance learning technologies in this teaching:
 - > Students screened and placed suitably for each level
 - > Less "noise" background, the better
 - > Maximum 6 students at the start of class
 - > Use of wireless keyboard/mouse and remote control
- Most effective outcome measures
 - > Final exams that are curriculum-based; much more realistic as a measure of effectiveness of teaching/curriculum
 - > Teacher-created assignments
 - > Seamless access to using both ASL and English

Points of Discussion

- What are Deaf students' educational needs and goals?
- What is the ideal profile of the student most likely to succeed using this delivery format?
- Who recruits students and locally administers the assessment? Would they need training in using assessment?
- What is the possibility of working with more than one site?
- What would be the maximum/minimum number of students accommodated successfully?
- What are the expectations and responsibilities of the remote site coordinator and language facilitator?
 - > They should assist to recruit and assess participants
 - > Arrange remote sites for distance learning; coordinate with its IT staff
 - > Assist with the pre- and post-testing
 - > Provide teaching/tutoring support during sessions as back-ups
 - > Assist with conducting evaluation of technology effectiveness & collaborative partnerships
- How will the pilot measure success, i.e., impact on student progress, technology effectiveness, collaborative partnerships?

Acknowledgement

- ❖ PEPNet Northeast team
- ❖ Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing , Brattleboro, VT
- ❖ Hiram G. Andrews Center, Johnstown, PA
- ❖ LaGuardia Community College
 - > Information Technology (IT)
 - Instructional Services & Media Distribution Systems
 - Adult and Continuing Education
 - > Library Media Resource Center
 - > Sue Livingston, PhD, Professor, Basic English Skills

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