

**Training of Interpreters for Individuals  
who are Deaf  
and Individuals Who Are Deaf Blind**

**National Multicultural Interpreter Project  
to Address the Needs of Culturally Diverse Communities  
U.S. Department of Education Grant H160c50004**

**MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM OVERVIEW  
FOR INSTRUCTORS**

**A Curriculum for Enhancing Interpreter Competencies for Working  
within Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities**



**Project Years  
1996 - 2000**

**U.S. Department of Education  
OSERS Grant H160c50004**



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## **Why a starfish?**

There are leadership lessons in the starfish that related to the NMIP Consortium and Team Leaders. Notice a starfish is not organized with a “head” and vertebrate structure. Consider it has five limbs. Consider what happens when a starfish is turned upside down. “It is not predetermined which of the five limbs becomes the leader in righting the starfish. It seems that the leadership is assumed by the limb best positioned as a pivot for righting the animal. The process occurs not only in the righting action of the starfish, but in the walking action too, where movement of the countless ambulacral feet on each of the limbs, at first random, is gradually integrated into the movement of the limb as a whole.

This movement is similar to “the information-exchanging interaction itself which...creates an overall harmonized movement and the structure of the system.” The Japanese have organizations that are “harmonic mutual adjustment social processes.”

We used the organization of the starfish as a symbol and a metaphor for our NMIP Consortium and Team Leadership.

Special appreciation for the NMIP logo designed by Gabriel Gaytan.

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**Drop a pebble in the water  
and in a flash it is gone,  
but half-a-hundred ripples  
circle on and on and on,  
spreading from the center,  
flowing out into the sea,  
there is no way of telling where  
their end is going to be.**

**James W. Foley**

## **Dedication**

The National Multicultural Interpreter Project (NMIP) resonates to all who shared:

**The Power of Invitation**

**The Power of Collaboration**

**The Power of Shared Vision**

**The Power of Diversity**

**and The Power of Story**

This project is dedicated to each and every person whose lives the expanding waves of the "pebble" of our first National Multicultural Interpreter Project Consortium meeting touched. This NMIP project invited all to the "table" to develop the shared leadership of this project. In fact, our table and circle of talent kept expanding through the years. Collectively, we developed a shared mission, philosophy and vision of our profession that from our hands will be continued to be carried out in the hearts, minds, and Spirit of each of us.

NMIP was a collaborative and authentic effort to participate in multicultural teamwork and projects. Most of us involved came to this work and effort grounded in our own individual experiences having worked within our own unique cultural and ethnic communities. We grew in our cross-cultural experiences. We connected to others, identified new allies, and implemented new initiatives and supported emerging organizations.

In the 1990's the organizations representing "minority" interpreters and consumers raised the federal awareness of the tremendous unmet needs within their respective cultural and linguistic communities. In 1994, the Conference of Interpreter Trainers engaged the organization in the issues of diversity. During the administration of Dr. Robert Davila, this need was translated into a call for action within the U. S. Department of Education. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) announced this as one of the two national grant priorities in 1995. The NMIP project was selected and given five years to develop this curriculum. Our work is really just beginning as the federal "clock" has ticked down on our final days and minutes. Over the past five years, we have engaged in difficult and revealing dialogues on racial and ethnic issues and field tested our philosophies in challenging situations. NMIP representatives have individually and collectively traveled from Alaska to Puerto Rico, from Hawaii to the Virgin Islands. We have spoken to hundreds of students, interpreter educators, interpreters, and consumers both at large national conventions and regional conferences and engaged in thousands of hours of deeply personal conversations. With each encounter, we have shared the power of personal experiences and stories. Each of the team leaders, consultants, and staff have gone far beyond the level of personal involvement and commitment anticipated. However, we hope that all the experiences that we have collectively shared and documented will change the course of our profession, our careers and our lives.

Over the past five years we have stood on the shoulders of those who began this work, not only in our field, but in many other organizations. The National Conference on Race and Ethnicity has been touchstone experience for the NMIP Team Leaders. We have had to adapt from the theory and experience of other multicultural fields such as education, sociology, counseling to related to our shared experiences. There remains so much more research both qualitative and quantitative to be done directly in our field. Our work needs to be continued. We send this work out to the field, not as a finished and polished product, but as the foundation to the bridge that we all will cross together. Our vision for this new millennium is a fully inclusive and diverse community of sign language interpreters who are a part of the larger human web. We are deeply respectful and appreciative of each of you who shared of yourself during this project.

## **Acknowledgments**

We wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of the many interpreters, consumers, consultants and staff who participated in the development of this curriculum. Without their expertise, personal and professional insights, and collaboration. The project could not have attained its level of authenticity, involvement, and ultimate quality nor met the necessary timelines. With deep respect, appreciation and gratitude we recognize the following:

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**How wonderful it is that nobody need  
wait  
a single moment before starting  
to improve the world. - Anne Frank**

## **National Multicultural Interpreter Project**

The National Multicultural Interpreter Project (NMIP) has completed its final year grant, funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA Grant H160c50004), to improve the quantity and quality of interpreting services provided to individuals who are D/deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind from culturally diverse communities by providing educational opportunities, recruiting culturally diverse interpreters and enhancing cultural sensitivity within the profession. The NMIP mission, philosophy, and vision statements are:

### **Mission**

The mission of the National Multicultural Interpreter Consortium is to improve the quantity and quality of interpreting services provided to individuals who are D/deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind from culturally diverse communities by providing educational opportunities, recruiting culturally diverse interpreters, and enhancing cultural sensitivity with the profession.

### **Philosophy**

As the National Multicultural Interpreter Project Consortium representing diverse racial, ethnic, national origins; religious and political beliefs; physical abilities; and sexual orientation; we affirm the dignity inherent in all individuals and we strive to provide a communication and multicultural climate marked by respect for individual differences and backgrounds.

### **Vision**

The National Multicultural Interpreter Project will create educational opportunities and innovative interpreter curricula. Consumers, interpreter educators, interpreters, and students will engage in collaborative efforts to form partnerships. NMIP will support a pluralistic vision of the interpreting profession. This effort will lead to better communication among all people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Adopted by the NMIP Consortium - March, 1997.

**Everybody wants to do something to  
help,  
but nobody wants to be first. - Pearl  
Bailey**

# **NMIP Multicultural Curriculum Overview for Instructors**

## **Changing the Curriculum Paradigm to Multilingual and Multicultural as Applied to American Sign Language and Interpreter Education Programs**

### **What is multicultural curriculum reform?**

Multiculturalism is a philosophical position and movement which assumes that gender, ethnic, racial and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of its institutionalized structures but especially in educational institutions, including the staff, norms and values, curriculum, and student body. (Banks and Banks, 1993).

### **What is interpersonal multicultural competence?**

Multicultural competence requires a paradigm shift of perception from ethnocentrism to perceptual and empathetic orientation to see and treat others as “central.” It is not an infinite or finite set of academically acquired culturally specific skills. It is development of respect and appreciation for differences. It requires a strong sense of personal awareness, sense of self, and understanding to move along the continuum of cultural awareness from sensitivity to having competency interacting with others who are different. It is a set of competencies encompassing:

- Acquiring knowledge of group cultural identity,
- Acquiring the meaning of behavior within cultural contexts,
- Understanding how others perceive their world and view us,
- Acquiring behaviors for working within specific cultures, and
- Approaching others using their cultural perspectives and to gain their trust.

### **What is a definition of multicultural education?**

The Association for Supervision Curriculum Development (ASCD) in 1976 developed a statement that described multicultural education:

“Multicultural education is a humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice, and alternative life choices for all people. It is mandatory for quality education. It includes curriculum, instructional, administrative, and environment efforts to help students avail themselves of as many models, alternatives, and opportunities as possible from the full spectrum of our culture....Multicultural education is a continuous, systematic process that will broaden and diversify as it develops. It views a culturally pluralistic society as a positive force that welcomes differences as vehicles for understanding.” (Cited in Grant, 1977, p.3.)

### **What are the broad goals of multicultural curriculum change?**

The infusion of multiculturalism leads to social change and justice. A core multicultural curriculum and mode of instruction would enable students:

1. to learn the history and contributions to society including the diverse D/deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-Blind and interpreter groups who comprise the population of the United States;
2. to respect the culture and language of these diverse D/deaf and interpreter groups;
3. to develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of one's own multiple group characteristics and how these characteristics can impart privilege or marginalize the individual or group; and
4. to learn how to bring about social and structural equality and work toward that end.

### **What are the primary levels of activities within a program?**

It involves changes to many levels of activities within a program. These include:

1. exploring our own racial and ethnic identities including self-awareness activities or faculty, staff and students;
2. building a community of learners by establishing program norms that include respect, inclusion, and trust;
3. expanding faculty and student perspectives by including new input from outside the mainstream or norm and validating the perspectives of all;
4. analyzing language and linguistic diversity issues by comparing and defining with ethnographic descriptive not prescriptive tools; and
5. acknowledging and celebrating diversity and multicultural differences throughout the entire program.

## What are the frequently “invisible” or omitted ethnic and cultural issues in a curriculum?

Some of the critical “invisible” and omitted the cultural and ethnic issues are:

1. **Invisibility** – The significant omission of Deaf minority groups, Deaf women’s issues, and other diversity issues in curriculum materials implies that these groups are of less value, importance, and significance in our society.
2. **Stereotyping** – When a group is assigned traditional or rigid roles based on norms and standards of the dominant Deaf Culture in instructional materials, activities or interactions, students are denied a knowledge of the diversity and complexity of that group.
3. **Selectivity** – Textbooks, in particular, have perpetuated bias by offering only bilingual (ASL/English) or bicultural (Deaf/Hearing) interpretation of an issue, situation or group of people; this restricts the knowledge, skill development and real life preparation of students in the field regarding varied perspectives of other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
4. **Unreality** – Videotapes, general textbooks and other curriculum materials have presented an unrealistic portrayal of history, glossing over prejudice and discrimination.
5. **Fragmentation** – By separating issues relating to deaf minorities from the main body of text or curricular content, we imply that these issues are less important than issues of “mainstream” Deaf culture.
6. **Linguistic Bias** – Curriculum materials reflect the nature of the ASL and English as traditionally used by the white Deaf Community which reflects cultural bias in the use of register, style, facial expressions, lexicon, and use of classifiers and gesture systems to represent cultural terms. This bias does not adequately represent the complexity and variation in ASL and English as used by Deaf people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It is significant to acknowledge that in many communities and educational programs that the diverse communities are now the “majority” minority.

## **Multicultural Curriculum Inclusion, Infusion, Transformation and Social Change**

Curriculum change is either superficial or seeks to challenge the deep structures of the society's institutions to respond to the need to educate and empower the pluralistic society it serves. The terms of inclusion, infusion, and transformation are used to define the goals of the three approaches to curriculum change. The four levels refer to the depth of the curriculum change within the program. The following theory, comparisons, and examples are based directly from the work of Banks and Banks (1995).

### **How are inclusion, infusion, and transformation and change defined?**

#### **Curriculum Inclusion**

A primary goal of curriculum inclusion or improvement is to include the "omitted" or to correct the stereotyped portrayals of groups. A multicultural curriculum modification is accomplished either through curriculum inclusion or curriculum change. It is characterized by inclusion of the 3 C's of culture: cuisine, costumes and crafts. This selective information is presented as a supplement, addendum or in addition to what is currently taught.

#### **Curriculum Infusion**

Multicultural content is "infused" into all aspects of the curriculum on a regular and routine basis; the information is about "all" people and presented to "all" students regardless of their racial, ethnic, cultural background, and is woven into all courses and activities. It forms the basis for the faculty student relationships with the communities. It can be seen in every unit, curriculum guide, book chosen, audiovisual aid chosen, and the physical environment of the program. It focuses on past problems and future potential, the patterns, issues, concepts and trends that change over time. It is multiethnic, multicultural, interdisciplinary, and comparative in nature.

#### **Curriculum Transformation and Change**

Curriculum transformation and change goes beyond inclusion and infusion to a core value paradigm shift that leads to strong social action, equality, and transformative dimensions. In curriculum transformation and change the core principles and values of the status quo are challenged. At this level of transformation, all levels of the program, from the integration of the program into the community, the advisory boards, faculty, recruitment, curriculum materials, teaching methodology, and program activities are impacted.

## What are the four levels of multicultural curriculum change as applied to ASL and interpreter education?

### Level 1: The Contributions Approach

Multicultural elements are discussed primarily in terms of the inclusion of contributions of “famous” Deaf minority individuals during cultural heritage celebrations on campus. Other discrete cultural elements are brought in occasionally.

For example, famous Deaf individuals who are minority role models are introduced with their accomplishments –a picture and paragraph on the life of Dr. Robert Davila is placed on display during Hispanic Heritage Month or a speaker from National Black Deaf Advocates is asked to make a presentation to a Deaf Culture class during Black History Month.

### Level 2: The Additive Approach

Multicultural content, concepts, or activities are added to the curriculum without changing the structure of the core curriculum.

For example, a lecture on “Signs in the Black Deaf Community” is added to an interpreting class or a unit focusing on multicultural interpreting could be added to an interpreting in a “special” situations class. Interpreting students watch videotaped source language practice materials with “people of color” highlighted, but the topics in general are safe, non-emotionally charged subjects.

### Level 3: The Transformation Approach

The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural D/deaf groups. All courses approach each thematic topic from a comparative cross-cultural perspective.

**ASL instruction:** For example ASL instruction includes a lesson on “ASL descriptions” of people. It includes multiple authentic photos and pictures of descriptive of individuals from a wide variety of worldwide cultural backgrounds, clothing and attire, facial features, skin tones, body shapes, hairstyles, jewelry or other adornments. A lesson on “classifiers” includes descriptions of drums to include: a snare drum, an Indian “water” drum, and a Cuban conga drum. An activity with functional “classifiers” includes a selection of everyday household items includes a Jewish menorah, a Mexican tortilla press, a Navajo patterned rug, a wok, and other items of daily use.

***Fingerspelling skill practice:*** For example fingerspelling skill practice on people's names, place names and other information from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Maria and Juan as well as Mary and John, Mrs. Kashiwa as well as Mrs. Johnson, places like Taipei, or people such as the Iroquois - Haudenosaunee.

***Deaf Culture courses:*** For example American Deaf History and Deaf Culture includes thematic units on the education of the Deaf in the United States including potential discussions and multicultural themes such as:

- the contributions of the French and the Spanish to the development of deaf education in the United States;
- the impact of segregation and civil rights legislation on the education and signing variations of generations of older and younger Black Deaf adults;
- the implications of the victimization and arrests of Mexican National Deaf peddlers as it relates to the current issues of White Deaf peddlers in the United States;
- the implications of using Signed English systems when serving predominantly Spanish-speaking families;
- the importance of the preservation of American Indian Sign Language to the tribal and cultural education of American Indian Deaf children currently residing on reservations.

***Interpreting skill development:*** For example selection of texts that include deeply embedded cultural values and provide a range of discourse, code-switching and other linguistic features of a number of contrastive cultural groups. Selected materials represent a range of topics to include emotionally charged materials.

#### **Level 4: The Action Approach**

Students participate in dialogue on important social, community issues, and problems. Students individually and collectively take action to become engaged to solve them.

For example, in an interpreting course, the class compares and contrasts the language and discourse variations among various cultural styles that influence the communication patterns of non-native born Deaf students, the generations of Black signers, the use of ASL by Puerto Rican Deaf persons. Students undertake a "student service learning experience" as volunteer tutors at the community literacy program for immigrant Deaf adults and assist these individuals in documenting through drawing, videotaping and writing projects their individual life experiences.

For example in observation, practicum, and internship experiences, students are placed in environments where cross-cultural mentoring opportunities are available.

Student organizations fund raise to support attendance at the National Alliance of Black Interpreters, Mano A Mano, Intertribal Deaf Council, or similar consumer based events as well as the state interpreter conventions for student representatives.

Adapted directly by Mary L. Mooney directly from the theory presented in "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice," by James A. Banks in *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, edited by J. A. Banks and C. A. M. Banks, New York: Macmillan, 1995.

## CONTENT AND SEQUENCING OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

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<p><b>1.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sensitivity Awareness/ ATTITUDE CHANGE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking out of your ethnocentrism</li> <li>• Considering other Cultures as different but not inferior</li> <li>• GENERIC</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">Ethnocentrism Perception Stereotyping Development Concept Culture Concept Worldview Biculturalism Models for Comparing/Contrasting Cultures Culture Shock Acculturation Cycle Levels of Acculturation</p>
<p><b>2. KNOWLEDGE/ INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</b></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>AREA STUDIES</b> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">A. re: Your Own Country <b>AMERICAN STUDIES</b></p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">B. re: Target Country <b>COUNTRY SPECIFIC</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>COVERAGE</b> </div> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Political Economic Historical Social Philosophical Religious Aesthetic</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Values Implicit Cultural Assumptions Cognitive Styles</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">----- <b>LANGUAGE STUDY</b></p>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SKILLS Development</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing Transitions</li> <li>2. Basic Survival Skills: e.g. Finding a place to live Buying things/bargaining Ordering in a restaurant Using public transportation</li> <li>3. Asking directions</li> <li>4. Replacing Old Stabilizers</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Value Determination</li> <li>6. Information Gathering and Validation</li> <li>7. Functioning According to New Culture</li> <li>8. Norms</li> <li>9. Dealing with Ambiguity</li> <li>10. Communicating in a New Language</li> <li>11. Non-Verbal Communication (Gestures)</li> </ol>

## **Multicultural Curriculum Paradigm Change Involves all Learning Domains**

Multicultural curriculum change involves all the domains of learning the affective, the cognitive, skill building and the application of decision-making strategies with a new set of cultural frames. Strategies for development of an integrated or infused multicultural interpreter curriculum involve the three domains of learning. These are sometimes given the acronym “ASK” for affective, skills, and knowledge:

**Affective Domain** The affective domain is learning that includes strong “feelings.” It emphasizes attitudes, values and beliefs, and the primary issue is TRUST because it involves levels of RISK. It is concerned with how issues of silence, safety, and power contribute to these feelings. An example would be including the feelings and experiences of a Deaf minority member or interpreter who has experienced discrimination or oppression and feels comfortable and safe enough to share.

**Cognitive Domain** The cognitive domain involves knowledge. It emphasizes facts, theories and definitions or other schema. It involves levels such as acquiring facts, comprehending, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. It is critical to realize that cognitive and skill building goals can have strong affective components and the affective can become dominant if the learning goals change or the environment becomes unsafe. Some examples could include 1) define multilingual and multicultural, 2) list a national court case that required a multilingual interpreting team or list four communication characteristics of many Asian individuals, or 3) analyze this videotape for linguistic variations commonly observed in signers from Spanish-speaking backgrounds such as Puerto Rico.

**Skill Building Domain** The skill building domain emphasizes learning new behaviors or skills that can be seen or measured. It includes a range of steps from learning to perceive and respond, then guided practice, and mastery. Some examples of skill are 1) identifies and perceives code-switching in African American/Black Deaf signers, 2) correctly pronounces and fingerspells the names of ten regional American Indian nations, 3) can effectively interpret from spoken Spanish to ASL, or 4) adapts greeting and interpreting protocol that is appropriate for National Asian Deaf Congress events.

**Decision Making** Decision-making involves all of the above domains. It is the integration of “ASK” skills as applied to realistic interpreting work situations in the context of ethnical and professional behaviors within multilingual and multicultural communities.

Graphic - Content and Sequencing of Cross - Cultural Training by Kohls. R. in Training Know-How for Cross Cultural and Diversity Trainers by L. Robert Kohls with Herbert L. Brussow.  
Adapted directly from the work of Chris Culligan, Training Administrator, Office of Human Resources, U. of Oregon as presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual NCORE Conference.

## **Multicultural Curriculum Program Assessment Questions**

The following are some questions that should be considered by all shareholders in the change process prior to a curriculum revision project.

1. What are the underlying assumptions, principles or norms of your program?
2. What kinds of knowledge and skills are valued? What kinds of knowledge and skills are not valued?
3. What changes do you envision making in your unit, module, course, or program?
4. How will these assumptions, principles and norms change as you include more materials and knowledge from previously excluded or “invisible” groups?
5. How have multicultural seminars and readings changed your perspective of the profession?
6. What human, media, or technical resources do you have or need to have access?
7. What types of changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills as seen in behavior or skill demonstration do you hope to see in students taking your revised courses?

Source: Ann Louise Keating, Project Coordinator, Presidential Curriculum Revision Project, Eastern New Mexico University.

## Some NMIP Suggested Strategies for Multicultural Curriculum Transformation

The following list may help you get started rethinking your program and curriculum:

1. Explore our unique multicultural American Deaf Communities to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious, generational, age, geographical and regional, educational, political, economic and social class, and linguistic differences.
2. Infuse diversity while promoting social justice and unity.
3. Infuse multicultural concepts and activities across the curriculum.
4. Organize the NMIP multicultural competencies and content across inter-course strategies:
  - ◆ Provide general information on cultures: African American/Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Euro-American/White, Hispanic/Latino in all courses:
    - ASL courses including fingerspelling
    - U. S. Deaf Community and culture courses
    - Interpreting theory and skills development courses
    - Internships and related courses
  - ◆ Include multicultural readings in all units to discuss issues related to the profession in general.
  - ◆ Include multicultural writing and journal assignments related to issues.
  - ◆ Provide access to interaction and communication with individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as faculty, guest presenters, on videotapes, as mentors, and work experience supervisors in a wide variety of topics and areas not only confined to “multicultural topics.”
  - ◆ Encourage the development of self-esteem with encouragement in self-exploration and pride for all racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
  - ◆ Utilize appraisal and evaluation procedures that are unbiased. Consider portfolio approaches to provide alternative evaluation processes.
  - ◆ Encourage self-awareness and identity development in context of a multicultural profession.

- ◆ Provide opportunities for all students to develop leadership and communication skills in multicultural settings.
- ◆ Provide opportunities to develop and emphasize the value and benefits of developing multicultural and multilingual skills in individuals and teams.
- ◆ Determine culturally relevant norms and teach skills required or preferred by culturally diverse communities.
- ◆ Provide all students access to develop computer literacy skill and internet skills so that they will be able to network and obtain a wide range of multicultural information.

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- Kohls, Robert L.
- Note: Chris Culligan in the Training Administrator, Office of Human Resources, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. This institute and other outstanding presentations are presented annually as part of the National Conference On Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) conferences. Contact: [www.occe.ou.edu/NCORE/](http://www.occe.ou.edu/NCORE/)

## The Legend of the Starfish

There was a young man walking down a deserted beach just before dawn. In the distance he saw a frail old man. As he approached the old man, he saw him picking up stranded starfish and throwing them back into the sea. The young man gazed in wonder as the old man again and again threw the small starfish from the sand to the water. He asked, "Old man, why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?"

The old man explained that the stranded fish would die if left in the morning sun.

But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish!" exclaimed the young man. "How can you make any difference.?"

The old man looked down at the small starfish in his hand and as he threw it to the safety of the sea, he said,

"I make a difference to this one."

.....Make a difference to this student.

Source: Author unknown.

## **The NMIP Consortium Vision for the NMIP Curriculum**

It is that NMIP Consortium vision that use of this curriculum will facilitate Interpreter Education Programs to 1) recruit, retain and graduate more interpreting students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and provide a more supportive educational and learning environment, and 2) to provide multicultural information and experiences and skills to all current and future students.

It is also intended to be used for in-service training so that current interpreters can improve the quality and quantity of interpreter services to better serve culturally and linguistically diverse D/deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf Blind consumers and their families by 1) increasing and expanding cultural knowledge and skills, and 2) increasing their comfort and effectiveness in working in multicultural and multicultural interpreter teams with both culturally and linguistically diverse interpreters both Hearing and Deaf.

### **How will interpreters benefit from the development of multicultural interpreter competencies?**

Interpreters who possess an array of multicultural competencies can work cooperatively and provide a more effective interpretation to a larger and more culturally and linguistically broader base of consumers both hearing and D/deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf Blind. Individual interpreters will be more likely to confidently develop their individual cultural and linguistic strengths and expand one's work options and team relationships, develop a sense of self-understanding and identity, and expand one's personal and social responsibility.

### **How can the curriculum materials be utilized?**

The NMIP curricula and materials can be delivered and infused into existing program in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: college courses including team taught courses, units and modules; short term workshops; at local, regional and annual conference presentations; long term seminars and institutes; emerging distance learning methodologies; independent study projects; using computer and multimedia projects, with internet searches, through self-paced learning modules, experiential learning, original research projects, cultural journals and portfolios.

### **Who can use these NMIP curriculum modules and resource materials?**

#### **NMIP multicultural curricula target audiences**

These modules were designed for all ASL and interpreter preparation programs and for use in workshops and in other training events. The competencies of the curriculum should form the basis of a program wide curriculum transformation process. A comprehensive curriculum transformation process is included in this document. Most

topics can be integrated into any course or unit adding cultural relevancy for all students as well an opportunity for the development of multicultural competencies that will enable all students and participants to reach their full potential.

## **Diversity with the Sign Language Interpreting Profession**

### **National Faculty Racial/Ethnicity Demographics**

According to the 1997 Fall Staff Survey by U. S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Post-Secondary Data System, the percentage of full-time faculty in degree-granting Title IV-eligible post-secondary institutions was 83.9% White, non-Hispanic, 4.9% Black, non-Hispanic, 2.6% Hispanic, and 5.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.3% Nonresident alien, and 0.5% race/ethnicity unknown. Since the field of American Sign Language and interpreting is a subset of these statistics then it is imperative that faculty and staff develop multicultural competencies if we are going to effectively educate interpreters to work with an increasingly diverse and multicultural D/deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-Blind population.

The NMIP Multicultural Curriculum has been developed for existing interpreter preparation programs. It is known that the interpreter educator demographics are primarily female from U. S. mainstream culture. The students of the program are still primarily female from U. S. mainstream cultural backgrounds. According to the 1998 NMIP survey of faculty both full and part-time and staff working in ASL and interpreter preparation programs 181 (90.5%) were Euro-American/White and 10% represented all other racial/ethnic groups.

### **Interpreting Student Demographics**

According to the NMIP Student Demographic Profile for Fall, 1998 out of 51 programs responding there were 1991 student enrolled in ASL and interpreter programs of this total 1,522 (76.4%) were Euro American/White, 169 (8.5%) Hispanic/Latino, 135 (6.8%) African American/Black, 33 (1.7%) Asian/Pacific Islander, 17 (0.9%) American Indian/Alaskan Native and 57 (2.9%) identified as Multicultural/Multi-Ethnic, and 58 (2.9%) provided "no response."

If these statistics capture the field in 1998, it can be safely assumed that the interpreters who are currently in the field are reflective of this demographic. This would include both hearing and Deaf Community interpreters.

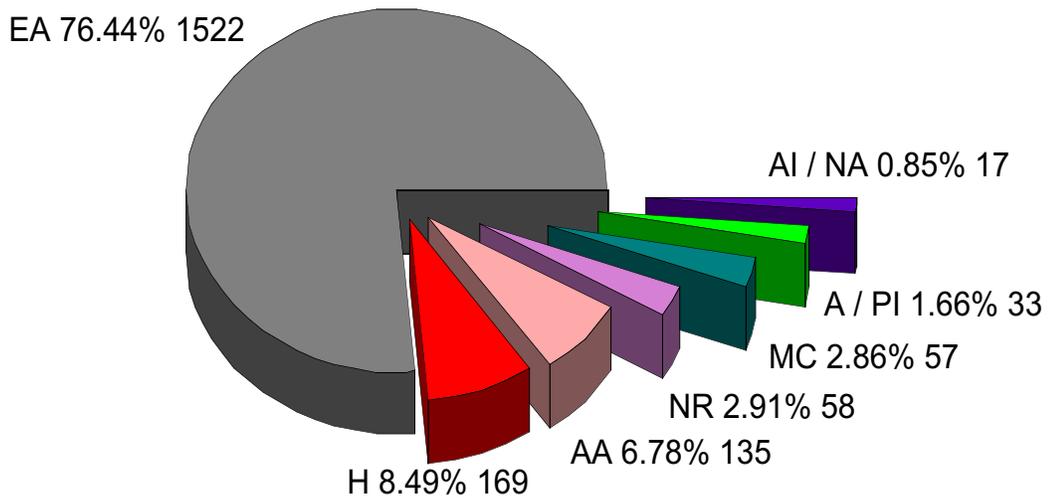
Hopefully, the future profession will be more diverse and representative of the changing demographics. ASL and interpreting curriculum needs to be transformed to meet the current consumer population and be supportive of all students in the programs.

## Student Demographic Profile

Fall 1998

Total Responding Students: 1991

Total Responding Programs: 51



## **Race/Ethnicity Demographics of Interpreters**

One of the most common questions asked of NMIP was what is the diversity within the current interpreter professional field. This question has not been successfully answered to the complexity of our field. We collectively still do not have an accurate number of all the interpreters that are working as volunteers and professional in the United States. There are a vast array of local urban and rural community settings especially in local educational programs in the United States that employ individuals who are not currently members of a professional organization or certified by a state or national organization. Only recently have the professional organizations such as the Conference of Interpreter Trainers and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf begun to keep voluntary information. Many individuals are still not adequately described by any existing labels. It is generally accepted that the numbers of interpreters of color are not in proportion to the changing demographic profiles of the current census.

The NMIP project collaborated with the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to complete a survey of the RID certified and non-certified membership for ethnicity. Preliminary results are being documented. The findings as of May 2000 were from a self-reporting check on the RID membership form. Of the current 8,172 members, of this total 4,329 indicated their race/ethnicity. A total of 3,870 or 89% self-identify as Euro-American/White; and 11% self identify as African American/Black 165; Hispanic/Latino 114; Native American/Alaskan Native 37; Asian/Pacific Islander 70; and 73 as "Other." Although professional membership of interpreters is still below the demographic of the general population, a baseline has been established, and membership initiatives are being implemented. RID has implemented a committee on Cultural Diversity in Leadership Committee, and NMIP has provided technical assistance and recommendations for membership recruitment. This curriculum guide is provided to assist programs in recruiting and retaining a representative proportion of students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

## RID Demographic Data

**Total RID Membership: 7,063 as of 9/30/00**

**Table 1: Hearing Status**

Group	Number Selected	Percentage of Total
Deaf	233	3.8
Deaf-Blind	3	< 1
Hard of Hearing	82	1.3
Hearing	5760	94.8
<b>Total</b>	6078	100

**Table 2: Ethnicity**

Group	Number Selected	Percentage of Total
African American/Black	189	3.6
Asian American/Pacific Islander	69	1.3
Euro-American/White	4679	90.0
Hispanic/Latino(a)	135	2.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	52	1.0
Other	76	1.5
<b>Total</b>	5200	100

**Table 3: Gender**

Group	Number Selected	Percentage of Total
Female	5223	87.1
Male	774	12.9
<b>Total</b>	5997	100

**Table 4: Ethnicity and Membership**

Group	Certified	Inactive	Retired	Associate	Student	Supporting	Trial	Total
African American / Black	55 <i>2.1</i>	0	1 <i>2.7</i>	88 <i>4.8</i>	26 <i>6.3</i>	20 <i>6.7</i>	1 <i>2.9</i>	191 <i>3.6</i>
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	30 <i>1.1</i>	0	0	26 <i>1.4</i>	9 <i>2.2</i>	3 <i>1.0</i>	1 <i>2.9</i>	69 <i>1.3</i>
Euro-American / White	2417 <i>91.9</i>	37 <i>94.9</i>	36 <i>97.3</i>	1651 <i>89.7</i>	337 <i>81.6</i>	256 <i>86.2</i>	31 <i>91.2</i>	4765 <i>90.1</i>
Hispanic / Latino (a)	52 <i>2.0</i>	0	0	46 <i>2.5</i>	27 <i>6.5</i>	9 <i>3.0</i>	0	134 <i>2.5</i>
American Indian / Alaskan Native	27 <i>1.1</i>	1 <i>2.6</i>	0	14 <i>0.8</i>	6 <i>1.5</i>	4 <i>1.3</i>	0	53 <i>1.0</i>
Other	47 <i>1.8</i>	1 <i>2.6</i>	0	16 <i>0.9</i>	8 <i>1.9</i>	5 <i>1.7</i>	1 <i>2.9</i>	78 <i>1.5</i>
<i>Total</i>	2692	39	37	1841	413	297	34	5290

*Italicized figures represent the percentages of the totals for that membership category.*

**Table 5: Gender and Membership**

Group	Certified	Inactive	Retired	Associate	Student	Supporting	Trial	Total
Female	2449 <i>84.0</i>	47 <i>87.0</i>	39 <i>84.8</i>	1992 <i>90.3</i>	461 <i>88.5</i>	309 <i>85.8</i>	42 <i>93.3</i>	5339 <i>86.8</i>
Male	468 <i>16.0</i>	7 <i>13.0</i>	7 <i>15.2</i>	213 <i>9.7</i>	60 <i>11.5</i>	51 <i>14.2</i>	3 <i>6.7</i>	809 <i>13.2</i>
Total	2917	54	46	2205	521	360	45	6148

*Italicized figures represent the percentages of the totals for that membership category.*

**Source: RID/NMIP Demographic Project Data as of 9/30/00**

### **Multicultural trainers and presenters**

The diversity of presenters in a program can be expanded by the recruitment of faculty, instructors, visiting faculty, mentors, intern supervisors, and lab assistants from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds. Diverse faculty and staff from other departments can augment lectures and presentations material. The expanded use of panel discussions, guest speakers and lecturers, outside cultural consultants, the use of compelling first person accounts, the development of mentorships both formal and informal, and the adoption of reading lists with authentic voices and stories from both fiction and non-fiction, and incorporation of multicultural videotape materials. Seminars and workshops can sponsor a variety of individuals to speak on a variety of professional development areas as well as multicultural topics. Look for:

3. Cultural Knowledge of the target community, gained either through first-hand experience or study.
4. Extended experiences working within the target culture, a minimum of two years (and preferably longer.)
5. A positive attitude towards the culture and toward the people of that culture.
6. The experience of having lived through and gained insight from culture shock/conflicts.
7. A fundamental knowledge of basic American/Euro-American values and implicit assumptions and how to articulate them.
8. Experience as a presenter/trainer, especially stand-up trainer, and particularly, in processing a variety of experiential learning techniques.
9. Interest in training for content as well as process.
10. Ability to handle frequently encountered emotions and sensitive issues related to the subject of multiculturalism.

### **NMIP Multicultural Consultant - Presenter Directory**

To assist programs in locating consultants, presenters, and panel members, the NMIP Project has developed a Multicultural Consultant - Presenter Directory. This directory is not in any way inclusive to all the presenters nor topics that are available but a starting point of contact and connections.

Adapted by Mary L. Mooney, NMIP NMIP Project Director

Based directly on the work of L. Rober Kohls. (1984). Intercultural training: don't leave home without it. Washington, DC: SIETAR.

## **Instructor Competencies, Strategies and Recommendations for Working with Students from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

### **Characteristics of Ideal Instructor for Adult and Non-Traditional Students**

The sign language profession needs the authentic access and understanding to the group of Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons that this student represents. Many students of color in predominantly white institutions are “at risk.” Some students may be considered “non-traditional.” Nationally, graduation rates for minority students are not in the same proportion as white students. A student of color is often an unwilling “minority” within a program. Appreciate and accept students as they are individuals with cultural and linguistic differences accepting their values, beliefs, and behaviors. You can expand your own and the student’s repertoire of professional skills and cultural behaviors with this attitude. Recognize your biases, everyone has their cultural filters and be willing to admit your mistakes and limitations. Become a “Master Learner.”

An ideal instructor seeks to understand the motivation and differing cognitive styles of students. Understands that some students may have an “advantage” and some students may be at “risk” in a given academic environment. Recognizes students who are:

Field Independent - Can move ahead on their own with little or no support from peers or teachers, or are

Field Dependent - Have a need for support from peers and teachers; may work better in small groups

The instructor understands the socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of students. Is aware that some students may be experiencing “culture shock.” The communication styles, communication styles, beliefs, attitudes, values, and perceptions may be greatly different than that of the instructor or peer students.

Acknowledges that some students may be facing additional barriers to attaining an education. They may be facing situational barriers such as:

- No financial stability,
- No childcare,
- No transportation,
- No housing, or coming from a distance from their “community,”
- And or extended family responsibilities.

In additional barriers may be inconvenient class schedules or class locations. Unseen attitudinal barriers may be inconvenient class schedules or class locations. Unseen attitudinal barriers from past negative school experiences or a parental or community

resistance to career choice may create additional stress. A student of color may be the involuntary “minority” would prefer class with peers, or may prefer the experience.

There are unique gender issues in come cultural group. Career working conditions may be non-supported in the culture, ie. traveling alone to assignments; non-traditional work hours or locations; late hours, traveling alone. Some may be experiencing significant pressure from culture, family, peers regarding the masculine/feminine perception of the profession. These issues need to be explored in the context of a person’s lifetime and career plans.

The instructor needs to realize that some students may have unique religious issues. They may be participating in religious/spiritual observances not scheduled on the school calendar or shared other students. Programs need to be sensitive to these needs.

It is critical to be aware of the potential backgrounds of students and their relationship to the students motivation. The ideal instructor understands the relationship of content to student’s reality and attempts to:

Make the class a “community” of learners where all views are respected.

Brings speakers into the classroom from diverse backgrounds to connect signing and interpreting to student’s lives.

Take students to environments where a diversity of clients are present such as adult literacy programs, and community programs.

Invites these individuals into your class.

Utilize diverse multicultural scenarios during role play but while avoiding stereotypical representations.

Use visual aids - photographs and movie clips to enhance a shared understanding.

Develop a library of stories and tapes relevant to the communities of your students.

Strive for genuine communication and interaction

Some critical cultural competencies and characteristics of an effective instructor are:

- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Cognitive and behavioral flexibility
- Personal self-awareness, strong personal identity
- Cultural self-awareness
- Patience

- Enthusiasm and commitment.
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Tolerance of differences
- Openness to new experiences and to people who are different.
- Empathy
- Sense of humility
- Sense of humor

Some instructional strategies that may assist in retaining students:

Treat every student as an individual.

An instructor can't assume to know any one individual or specific cultural group's experience. Although you are working with a person from a specific ethnic/cultural background, they are also an individual and may differ as greatly as one another, as any two other individuals without a common racial/ethnic/cultural background. It is critical not generalize. Any one student cannot be expected to represent their cultural or ethnic group. Invite a guest speaker who is prepared to speak on the general topics.

Initiate support programs early and keep them up during the academic training.

Programs of an invitational nature:

Open house activities with appropriate invitational and welcoming strategies.  
 Use successful role-model students with the group.  
 Involve parents, spouses and family support  
 Use students as presenters and program recruiters.

Invite successful culturally diverse role-model adults from many walks of life to discuss their careers and lives with all students.

Keep an open door policy and practice "concerned listening behaviors" to develop trust.

Make early referrals if needed to academic services that the student may not be aware:

General tutorial services  
 Child care support  
 Multicultural support services on campus, and or  
 Work study and financial aid

Recommend outstanding students and students who are overcoming obstacles to:

Scholarships both in the field and other related organizations.  
 Student rep positions at state/regional and national conventions  
 Create volunteer student positions at local and state level workshops/conventions to give students a chance to network and participate.

Make early referrals to community services that the student may not be aware of  
Maintain a list of services, i.e. mental health counseling and clinics; women's support groups and agencies;

Integrate the student's values and beliefs/skills into teaching examples/case studies/role plays showing the value and appropriate inclusion of these values and cultural behaviors.

The value of listening before speaking. (Asian/Native American)

The value of group/team efforts over individual achievement.  
(Asian/Native American)

The value of expressive discourse styles (African-American)

The value of emotion or feelings expressed (Hispanic/Latino)

The value of speaking another language.

Acknowledge students with "non-standard English" accents, signing styles, and dialects

Obtain culturally relevant information about specific accents, dialects, and signing styles. These accents, dialects, and signing styles are the hallmark of an authentic cultural background and community interactions.

Expand on the student's strengths and expand their linguistic repertoires, registers, and vocal range do not seek to eliminate culturally specific styles.

Recognize the unique contributions and challenges of bilingual students who are foreign born or may not have English as their second language -

Obtain information about foreign-born students; and students for whom English is a second language. These students often have natural interpreting potential as they have already acquired a second language and understand the cultural and linguistic processes of interpreting. Often first, second and third generation children have a wealth of life experiences negotiating between two languages and cultures. Expand the students repertoire language skills.

Sources: Paige, R. Michael, ed. (1993), Education for intercultural experience. Intercultural Press, Inc. Yarmouth, ME. Copyright, 1993.

Training Know-How for Cross Cultural and Diversity Trainers by L. Robert Kohls with Herbert L. Brussow. Adult Learning Systems, Inc. PO BOX 458, Duncanville, TX 75138-0458

Some materials taken from a presentation for instructors of adult non-traditional students given by Andres Muro at El Paso Community College.

## **Overview of the NMIP Project and the DACUM Process**

**Never doubt that a small group of  
thoughtful, committed citizens can  
change the world; indeed, it's the only  
thing that ever does.**

**- Margaret Mead**

## **Overview of the National Multicultural Interpreter Project (NMIP) and the Developing A Curriculum Development (DACUM) Process**

### **NMIP Project Overview**

In January of 1996, El Paso Community College received a five year grant to implement an education and training project uniquely designed to meet the national interpreter trainer and interpreting needs of multicultural individuals who are D/deaf and individuals who are deaf-blind by: 1) implementing a National Multicultural Interpreter Consortium; 2) publishing the results of surveying, identifying and quantifying the multicultural issues involved with the recruitment, training, and retention of interpreters from culturally diverse backgrounds; 3) providing technical assistance to the RSA Regional Interpreter Training Projects; 4) developing and disseminating four comprehensive interpreter curriculum packages, 5) producing and disseminating training videotapes, and 6) providing training and workshops that will positively impact interpreters, interpreting students, interpreter educators, and consumers at national conferences, regional, state and local field based sites.

### **NMIP Curriculum Development Process - DACUM**

The NMIP project utilized a process known at El Paso Community College as the DACUM process “**Developing A Curriculum**” (**DACUM**). DACUM is a participatory approach to curriculum development. It is also used as a means of a program’s overall curriculum evaluation. This process is traditionally used in vocational programs to develop curricula geared to meet local and community needs.

This DACUM process was chosen, not because of its application in vocational and technical education, but rather for its emphasis on a group process approach to involve community “experts” brought together under the leadership of trained facilitators to generate, from personal and professional life experiences, the relevant competencies to be included in the NMIP curriculum development.

### ***Who has participated in the NMIP curriculum development?***

The NMIP project conducted, during 1996 and 1997, two large group DACUM input meetings with representation from the identified culturally and linguistically diverse groups. These meetings were specifically designed to generate the training competencies that consumers and interpreters identified as necessary to successfully interpret within the Hispanic, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan communities.

Curriculum consultant representation included members from each identified group with a balance of consumers, interpreters, student representatives, and outside cultural consultants. These consultants provided the community based and the professional input needed to identify and produce the multicultural competencies, and they are

conducting peer review of all curricula and materials produced. Individual consultants may rotate participation at different advisory board meetings and projects to allow for increased membership and involvement. Dr. Glenn Anderson, Dr. Steve Chough, Dr. Howard Busby, Dr. Angel Ramos, Dr. Jeff Davis served as senior editors. Dr. Glenn Anderson and Dr. Doug Watson served as national grant consultants for the entire process.

The NMIP Multicultural Team Leaders were:

Anthony Aramburo, African American-Black Team Leader  
Dr. Jeffrey Davis, Euro-American Team Leader  
Jonathan Hopkins and Tupper Dunbar, Native American/Alaskan Team Leaders  
Jan Nishimura, Asian American/Pacific Islander Team Leader  
Angela Roth, Hispanic/Latino Team Leader

### ***How did the NMIP DACUM work?***

A group of resource persons from the identified communities worked together to define the competencies and skills that are essential to the interpreting profession. The NMIP utilized a flexible adaptation of this process to identify the attitudes, knowledge and skills that an interpreter would require to effectively interpret for consumers who were from culturally diverse communities, specifically African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Native American/Alaskan backgrounds.

### ***What happened during the NMIP DACUM process?***

NMIP consultant members were guided by the project director, as facilitator, through several steps to reach the end product of NMIP DACUM Competency Statements. The result of the input was organized into a competency profile sheet. The profile sheet was then utilized to build the curriculum and used to evaluate a current curriculum design. These steps included:

1. Discussion of the characteristics of a multicultural interpreter and situations;
2. Identification of the major areas of multicultural competence;
3. Identification of the specific multicultural interpreter skills within each area of competence; and
4. Organization of the values, attitudes and behaviors in a realistic and logical sequence.

The NMIP curriculum development process focused on those areas of competence that were not currently being taught in many traditional interpreter preparation programs and workshops. Participants were asked to specifically address the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that would be required when training the interpreter to function in a variety of multilingual and/or multicultural situations or settings.

The NMIP DACUM consultants and team leaders identified a need to differentiate between an interpreting situation, that is by its nature or context multicultural and/or multilingual, and individuals who as the interpreter(s) or the individual participants to an interpreted event, themselves may or may not be, multilingual and/or multicultural. Examples of multicultural situations might be a Jewish Bar Mitzvah ceremony, a National Asian Deaf Congress convention, or an immigration hearing for a Mexican Deaf national who uses Mexican Sign Language. An example of a multicultural/multilingual interpreter might be a White Deaf interpreter who lived and was educated in Japan with professional fluencies in Japanese Sign Language, a Hearing Hispanic/Latino interpreter who is trilingual in Spanish/English/ASL, or a Black Hearing interpreter who has extensive experience working with elderly Black Deaf. This differentiation is needed when discussing the necessary cultural and linguistic skills required for a specific interpreting assignment and the interpersonal and intercultural dynamics of the interpreter team. The following NMIP working definitions provided a common starting point.

The results of the NMIP DACUM competency profile and the resulting curriculum packages are available to interpreter educators and programs to infuse, enhance, or to supplement any existing sign language interpreter curricula or post-service training.

Source: Norton, R. *DACUM A New Approach to Curriculum Development*. Columbus, Ohio: National Center for Research in Vocational Education

## NMIP DACUM Process Products

The NMIP DACUM process produced the following products:

- A Definition of a Multicultural/Multilingual Interpreting Situation
- A Definition of a Multilingual/Multicultural Sign Language Interpreter
- A Definition of a Multilingual/Multicultural Interpreter Team
- Guidelines for Appropriate Interpreting Service Provisions in the Selection of Multilingual and Multicultural Interpreter(s) and/or Team
- Guiding Principles for the NMIP Multicultural Curriculum
- NMIP DACUM Competencies Statements:
  - A. Multicultural Background and Knowledge Competencies
  - B. Multicultural Sensitivity Competencies
  - C. Multicultural Interpreting Skill Competencies
  - D. Multicultural Decision Making Competencies

From the DACUM Process the following curriculum materials were developed:

Multicultural Curriculum Overview for Instructors  
Interpreting in Multicultural Communities - Euro American-2 Modules  
Interpreting in the African American/Black Communities-2 Modules  
Interpreting in the American Indian/Alaskan Native Communities-2 Modules  
Interpreting in the Asian American/Pacific Islander Communities-2 Modules  
Interpreting in Hispanic/Latino(a) Communities-2 Modules  
Decision Making Processing in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse  
Communities - Creating Authentic Teams- 1 Module

## **NMIP Definitions**

### **A Definition of a Multicultural/Multilingual Interpreting Situation**

A multicultural/multilingual interpreting situation is one in which one or more of the consumers including the hearing and/or deaf participants, require additional cultural and linguistic competencies: the sensitivity, knowledge, background, interpreting skills and language(s), beyond the assumed ASL/English, U.S. majority culture/American Deaf Culture sign language interpreting paradigm, necessary to provide equal communication and cultural access, both in content and affect, receptively and expressively, for the given consumer(s) and situation.

### **A Definition of a Multilingual/Multicultural Sign Language Interpreter**

A multicultural/multilingual sign language interpreter is an interpreter, either Hearing and/or Deaf, that possesses the required cultural and linguistic competencies: the sensitivity, knowledge, background, interpreting skills and/or language(s) necessary to provide equal communication and cultural access, both in content and affect, receptively and expressively, for given a consumer(s) and situations.

### **A Definition of a Multilingual/Multicultural Interpreter Team**

A multicultural/multilingual team is two or more persons, hearing and/or deaf, that together possess the language(s) and cultural competencies necessary to provide equal communication access, both receptive and expressive, for a given individual or situation.

## **NMIP Recommended Guidelines for Appropriate Interpreting Service Provision in the Selection of Multilingual and Multicultural Interpreter(s) and/or Team**

1. **Culturally Salient Assessment** - Any interpreting situation or client must be assessed to determine if the interpreting event, content, presenter(s) or participants, the interpreter(s), or the audience will require specific and salient cultural or linguistic background or skills.
2. **Multilingual and Multicultural Competencies** - The coordinator must assure the presenter(s), or consumers, that the interpreter or team selected individually or collectively possess the language(s) and cultural competencies necessary to provide equal communication access, both in content and affect, receptively and expressively, for the given situation, consumers or audience involved.
3. **Provision of Certified and Qualified Deaf Interpreters** - The profession of sign language interpreters must acknowledge the absolute benefit and mandate to include the Deaf perspective in all aspects of planning, coordination and service provision. The inclusion of the cultural mediation role of certified and qualified Deaf interpreters, especially from culturally and linguistically communities, is essential to provide equal access to cultural and linguistically diverse Deaf, hard or hearing and Deaf-Blind communities. The profession must advocate for the inclusion of a certified or otherwise qualified deaf intermediary interpreter in any situation where the health and welfare of a culturally and linguistically D/deaf client is in jeopardy and other situations as appropriate.
4. **Professional Recognition** - There should a professional recognition that a diverse pool of interpreters and team members, both hearing and deaf, conveys and affirms by practitioners, educators, and consumers of the profession of sign language interpreting, that there is an appreciation and respect for the value added and the increased quantity and quality of services to all consumers.

## **NMIP Multicultural Curriculum - Guiding Principles**

- There are basic and common needs that all human beings share.
- All students, interpreters and consumers are individuals.
- All individuals proceed through racial and ethnic identity development processes.
- All individuals need to understand, appreciate and accept their own identity before understanding others.
- Not all people from a racial or ethnic minority group have cultural information about their own group or others.
- The curriculum should build a set of general cross-cultural and culturally-specific knowledge and skills.
- All interpreters should be provided access to a common multi-cultural knowledge base but not be aware of their cultural and linguistic limitations.
- All interpreters need strategies for dealing with inter-cultural and intra cultural conflicts.
- All need to work together to develop and support a more diverse pluralistic sign language interpreting profession in the United States as a world model.

## **NMIP DACUM Competencies Statements**

### **A. NMIP Multicultural Background and Knowledge Competencies**

1. Understand the implications of acculturation, enculturation, and assimilation processes on the individual and cultural groups.
2. Identify mainstream of U. S. dominant cultural patterns.
3. Explore one's own cultural identity in the context of mainstream or U. S. dominant culture.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical contexts of culturally and linguistically diverse deaf and hearing communities within educational, social, legal, medical, vocational, and political systems of the U. S. dominant culture.
5. Describe different cognitive styles that are culturally specific.
6. Identify the cross-cultural implications of eye contact, physical touch, and gestural systems.
7. Identify the cross-cultural implications of patterns of time, social protocols, and taboos.
8. Identify historical and contemporary cultural patterns related to gender roles, sexual orientation and physical appearance.
9. Demonstrate knowledge and respect of culturally specific attire, styles, food, celebrations, religions, spiritual beliefs, and holidays.
10. Recognize that specific cultural vocabularies have a high emotional content based on specific historical perspectives.
11. Describe the implications of geographical issues such as country of origin, immigration patterns, and current demographics of culturally and linguistically diverse deaf and hearing communities.
12. Discuss the cross-cultural implications of class identification, social and economic status, literacy, and educational achievement.
13. Recognize in-group cultural variation and regional differences.
14. Identify positive contributions made by deaf and hearing individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

## **B. NMIP Multicultural Sensitivity Competencies**

1. Describe the impact and the effects of oppression, racism and stereotypes have on the individual and the group.
2. Demonstrate awareness of “power balance/imbalance” and the “power of attribution.”
3. Identify stages of cultural and cross-cultural identity for U. S. White cultures and non-dominant cultures.
4. Describe the process of cultural and racial identification and bonding, including generational factors.
5. Demonstrate the ability not to impose one’s own value systems and biases on members from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
6. Demonstrate attitudes, empathy, listening and observational abilities with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
7. Recognize and acknowledge consumer’s rights, choices, and comfort level.
8. Recognize the overt and covert consumer challenges relative to access to interpreter systems and interpreter’s knowledge of the consumer’s culture.
9. Establish rapport following culturally and linguistically appropriate techniques.
10. Make appropriate cultural and linguistic adjustments to accommodate individuals from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
11. Demonstrate an awareness and sensitivity to social protocols and social introductions.
12. Understand the implications of gender roles and sexual orientation issues, recognize the differences between sexual versus non-sexual “signals” and communication.
13. Recognize the cultural implications of religious views in various interpreting settings.
14. Compare and contrast culture views of medicine and mental health services in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
15. Make appropriate, cultural adaptations and participate comfortably in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### **C. NMIP Multicultural Interpreting Skill Competencies**

1. Interpret at the baseline skill level required for a variety of cross-cultural settings.
2. Demonstrate strong observational and visual language techniques.
3. Demonstrate cultural and linguistic analysis skills.
4. Convey appropriate cultural attitudes and meaning.
5. Identify and apply multilingual skills to meet the different language modes used by consumers.
6. Maintain culturally appropriate linguistic registers.
7. Demonstrate a knowledge base of regionally and culturally specific lexicon.
8. Recognize non-manual signals and gestures that are culturally specific.
9. Differentiate between “in-group” and “out-group” sign usage.
10. Interpret the deeper meaning of terms related to their context and situation to include the connotative, denotative meanings, and not false cognates.
11. Analyze and apply appropriate use of linguistic space and dominance issues related to sign placement and referencing that are culturally specific.
12. Analyze ASL spatial non-manual features that are culturally specific and be aware of dominance issues related to sign placement and referencing.
13. Make appropriate cultural and linguistic adaptations according to the interpretation and audience.
14. Anticipate and prepare for specific culturally diverse assignments and events.

#### **D. NMIP Multicultural Decision-Making Competencies**

1. Analyze the values of the U.S. mainstream culture reflected in codes of ethical conduct for interpreters compared with the values of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
2. Compare the interpreter's role and function as a linguistic and cultural mediator contrasted to that of an advocate between disparate cultural paradigms and the deaf and hearing consumers' perceptions, assumptions, and expectations.
3. Identify the guiding principles, sociolinguistic variables and other complicating cultural factors required to select and match interpreters and/or interpreter teams to various consumers, settings, and topics within culturally and linguistically diverse interpreting situations and settings.
4. Recognize the cultural implications of one's own specific cultural norms, behaviors and values and their impact on an interpreting assignment.
5. Obtain cultural information as it occurs during an interpreted event and share this information within the team interpreting framework.
6. Develop strategies for appropriately and effectively involving the consumers for both Deaf and Hearing in the negotiating and decision making processes and for resolving cross-cultural conflict.
7. Negotiate between one's own cultural norms, as a culturally and linguistically diverse interpreter, and the dominant U. S. cultural norms for professional self-advocacy and empowerment.
8. Practice working in authentic cultural teams that include certified and/or otherwise qualified deaf interpreter(s), cultural liaisons, and hearing team members.
9. Develop dominant culture and minority culture partnerships to complement synergy and provide two-way mentoring opportunities.
10. Promote the appreciation and value of interpreters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds within the interpreting profession and by consumers of interpreting services.

## **NMIP Multicultural Curriculum Module Sequence**

From these above identified NMIP DACUM competencies, a comprehensive general overview multicultural curriculum was developed. It includes one overview module and four culturally specific curriculum areas with related training materials and videotapes. The curricula is geared to interpreter educators and workshop presenters to support developing multicultural awareness and communication competencies. These competencies have now been consolidated curricula that is organized into eleven modules. The modules are grouped into three broad domains: multicultural knowledge, sensitivity, and multicultural interpreting skills. These mirror the "Content and Sequencing of Cross-Cultural Training by SIETAR written by L. Robert Kohls in 1985. The last comprehensive module focuses on applying these attitudes, knowledge and skills in multicultural decision-making context.

It is recommended to start with the general multicultural modules and then either proceed through one such as African American/Black and then proceed to interpreting skills development. In this manner the modules can be used as a "track" sequence of instruction for one or more the identified groups.

### **Multicultural Knowledge and Sensitivity Modules:**

- General Multicultural /Euro American Knowledge and Sensitivity
- Asian/Pacific Islander Knowledge and sensitivity
- American Indian and Alaskan Native Knowledge and Sensitivity
- African American/Black Knowledge and Sensitivity
- Hispanic/Latino Knowledge and Sensitivity

### **Multicultural Interpreting Skills Module**

### **Multicultural Decision- Making Skills in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities - Creating Authentic Teams**

- Multicultural Decision-Making Module
- Multicultural Assignments and Directory
- Multicultural Case Studies
  - African American/Black - Case Studies
  - American Indian and Alaskan Native - Case Studies
  - Asian/Pacific Islander - Case Studies
  - Hispanic/Latino - Case Studies
  - Multicultural - Euro-American - Case Studies

The decision making activities can be used as a final sequence or as an activities that set the stage for the need to develop additional skills in one or more cultural groups in professional seminars related to professional ethics.

The competencies, modules and activities are designed to be included in a curriculum transformation process. The curriculum module sequences can be the backbone to an intensive course or layered throughout an interpreter education program.

### **NMIP Module Organization**

The modules each consists of a:

- Module Description
- Participant Prerequisites
- Instructor Qualifications
- Learning Objectives from the DACUM competencies
- Topic Outline
- Supplemental Lecture Notes
- Suggested Resources and Instructional Materials
  - Resources
  - Recommended NMIP Videotapes
  - See NMIP Videotape Products
- Suggested Learning Activities

The project has also produced for web distribution and dissemination:

- NMIP Bibliography of Multicultural Bibliography and Resources
- NMIP Multicultural Consultant - Presenter Directory

## National Multicultural Videotape Products

Twenty-one (21) videotapes were produced by the NMIP project. The videotapes feature a variety of individuals both hearing and deaf from cultural and linguistically diverse background. They can be used for both professional discussions and content and as source material for expressive and receptive interpreting practice. Several of the videotapes have instructional guides/transcripts and/or are open captioned. A general description of each tape follows.

1. Waubensee Community College (1996) 6<sup>th</sup> International Teleclass Enhancing Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Interpreting Profession. September 27, 1996. Available from the National Clearinghouse on Rehabilitation and Training Materials and/or from Waubensee Community College. Tape 1 TRT 2:00.00; Tape 2 TRT 1:00.00[Videotape] Spoken English and Signed portions with Open Captioning.

This is the videotape of a live international teleclass from Waubensee Community College. It features a multicultural panel with Dr. Glenn Anderson, Jan Nishimura, Jonathan Hopkins, Fidel Martinez and Mary Mooney, NMIP Project Director

2. El Paso Community College (1996). We Are Here - Focusing on Solutions [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:28 ) ASL/English with English voice overs - Open Captioned)

An overview of the National Multicultural Interpreter Project and the need for including diversity in our sign language interpreting profession. Talk show format features Dr. Glenn Anderson, Jan Nishimura, NMIP Consultants and Mary L. Mooney, NMIP Project Director.

3. Region VI Interpreter Education Program (1999). The Legacy of Eliza Taylor [Videotape]. Little Rock, AR: University of Little Rock Arkansas.

This project was co-sponsored with UALR who produced and disseminated the videotape. Available from Media Services 4301 W. Markham, Slot 608, Little Rock, Arkansas, AR 72205.

4. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Life Experiences of Victor Vodounou - Benin, Africa [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:22.30) ASL/PSE Signed with English transcript

This is a biographical narrative divided into shorter segments of a Deaf African male who is pursuing higher education in the United States. The tape can be used for ASL to English interpreting and for multicultural discussions. The tape is not captioned. A script is available.

5. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Life Experiences of Donnette Reins - American Indian - Muskogee Nation [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:27) ASL with English voiceover and transcript.

This is a biographical narrative divided into shorter segments of a Deaf American Indian female who attended a residential school program. The tape can be used for ASL to English interpreting and for multicultural discussions. An instructional guide and script is available.

6. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Life Experiences of Ron Hirano - Japanese American [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT .66) (TRT :33 ASL only) and (TRT :33 ASL with model English voiceover)

This is a biographical narrative divided into shorter segments of a Deaf Japanese American male.

The tape can be used for ASL to English interpreting; and for multicultural discussions. Two versions are provided one without interpretation; and one with a model ASL voice interpretation by Jan Nishimura.

7. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Cherokee Identity a Social Construction Dr. Jeanette Haynes [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:42 Spoken English - Open Captioned)

This is a spoken lecture incorporating vocabulary and concepts dealing with American Indian/Alaskan Native issues. The lecture material can be used for English text analysis; ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous, and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion. An instructional guide and transcript is available.

8. Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). NMIP Multicultural Interpreter Issues: from the Deaf Multicultural Perspective with Dr. Angel Ramos, Martin Hiraga and Dr. Howard Busby [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:30.27 ASL with English voiceover)

This is a talk show format discussing multicultural interpreting issues from a Deaf consumer perspective. It is intended for information on multicultural and multilingual issues and perspectives. It can be used for ASL to English interpretation.

9. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Multicultural Interpreter Issues: From the Multicultural Interpreters' Perspective [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:58.02) Spoken English and Open Captioning.

This is a talk show format discussing professional issues from an interpreter's perspective. There are eight interpreters participating. Open captioned.

10. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Asian Values and Interpreting Issues - Jan Nishimura [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT :68 Spoken English and Open Captioned)

This is a lecture on Asian values and interpreting issues from the perspective of the NMIP Asian/Pacific Islander Team Leader - Jan Nishimura. The lecture material can be used for English text analysis, ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous, and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion.

11. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Mrs. Kanzaki, United States Patriot - Jan Nishimura, ASL Interpreter Model [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT .58) (Each segment is TRT :17: Spoken English (TRT .17) Spoken English with model ASL interpretation TRT :17) (ASL interpretation only TRT )

This presents an oral reading with a model ASL interpretation. The material can be used for English text analysis, ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion.

12. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: "Working Together: Interpreting Issues in the African American/Black Community" Anthony Aramburo, Presenter [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. TRT 26:51 Spoken English with Open Captions.

Segment One: "An Educational Path to Interpreting"  
Segment Two: "History of NAOBI - Anthony Aramburo, President  
Segment Three: "Working Together: Interpreting Issues in the African American/Black Community"

The three segments were designed to give an overview to interpreting within the African American/Black community. The lecture material can be used for English text analysis, ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous, and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion.

13. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Lectures: Martin Hiraga, Presenter  
Segment One: Asian Religious Paths TRT 16.03  
Segment Two: HIV Outreach Project TRT 18.22  
[Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. Spoken English.

The lecture material was designed to be stimulus material for interpreting practice. The two segments can be used for English text analysis; ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous, and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion. A transcript is available.

14. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Mexican American Deaf: Interpreting Issues in Mental Health Settings [Videotape]. Santa Fe, New Mexico. Santa Fe Community College and El Paso Community College.  
(TRT 33.00) English/Spanish/Lenguaje de Signos de Mexico with Open English Captions)

This videotape was designed to provide mental health professionals and sign language interpreters information on providing services in multilingual and multicultural contexts. It uses a narration and vignettes to demonstrate some of the complexities of providing appropriate hearing and Deaf multilingual interpreters.

15. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Mexican American Deaf: Interpreting Issues in Mental Health Settings [Videotape]. Santa Fe, New Mexico. Santa Fe Community College and El Paso Community College. (TRT 33.00) English/Spanish/Lenguaje de Signos de Mexico with Spanish Voiceover and Open Spanish Captions.

This videotape was designed to provide mental health professionals and sign language interpreters information on providing services in multilingual and multicultural contexts. It uses a narration and vignettes to demonstrate some of the complexities of providing appropriate hearing and Deaf multilingual interpreters. This is the Spanish language version.

16. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Mexico's Development of Sign Language Interpretation: A Trilingual Discussion in English/LSM/Spanish by Sergio Peña "Sign Language Interpreting Issues in Mexico" - Sergio Peña, Presenter [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 00:30 English version with open captions; Spanish version; and LSM "Mexican Sign Language" version.

This presentation is designed to provide some access to issues within our international interpreting community. The presenter provides an overview to some of the issues of the sign language interpreting profession in Mexico. He repeats his presentation in Lenguaje de Signos de Mexico and in spoken Spanish.

17. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). An Interview with Elena Avila, R.N., M.S.N. Curandera: Compassionate Medicine of the People English with some code-switching and Spanish terminology. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT 32.00) Spoken English with Open Captions.

This presentation is an insight into the important relationship of world and cultural views with mental health and medical practices. The lecture provides valuable information on Curanderismo and some views on Mexican folk medicine and illness. The lecture material can be used for English text analysis, ASL interpreting practice both consecutive and simultaneous, and for building pre-interpreting skills. The lecture models some Spanish vocabulary and code-switching in Spanish. The lecture can be used for multicultural information and discussion.

18. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). NMIP Recruitment Videotape [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT: 06.14 spoken English/ASL interpretation)

This is a sample recruitment videotape that depicts a need for diversity within the profession. It can be used as a promotional tool. A student recruitment manual and sample recruitment brochure are also available. Jeff Bowden is featured in the interpreted ASL translation.

19. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural & Linguistic Diversity Series: Multicultural Interpreting Assignments [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT: 39.13) Mixed Spoken and Signed Language Samples.

This videotape is designed to provide some brief samples of potential interpreting assignments and consumers. It is meant to stimulate discussion of the diversity of assignments that both coordinator of interpreting services and sign language interpreters encounter. There are 13 examples including both signed and spoken samples. Accompanying descriptions of the assignments and the workshop training activity is provided.

20. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Mexican American and Mexican National Deaf Language Samples Tape 1 [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT: 37:00) ASL only Language Samples.

These are biographical anecdotes divided into shorter narrative segments from a Mexican National and Mexican American experience.

Segments included are:

“Interpreting in the Family” by Pauline Arroyos (TRT 8.15)

“Why I Became an Intermediary Interpreter” by Pauline Arroyos (TRT 5.33)

“Communicating Within My Family and Our Community” by Raul Luna (TRT 5.12)

“Eye Surgery” by Sofia Baca (TRT 7.35)

The tape can be used for ASL to English interpreting and for multicultural discussions including the need for Deaf interpreters. These samples are in ASL only.

21. National Multicultural Interpreter Project (2000). Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Series: Mexican Geographical Signs with Victor Manuel Palma, LSM Language Model. [Videotape]. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College. (TRT: 12.30) Mexican Sign Language -Lenguaje de Señas Mexicano LSM signs only.

This is a signed demonstration of the states and capitol cities of Mexico. A listing of the states and capitols is provided.

It is anticipated that additional videotapes will be developed from the NMIP archival videotaped materials. Check NMIP website for updates.

**Other RSA Produced Videotapes:**

RSA Federal Project Tapes:

Region X Interpreter Education Center (1999). Understanding Diversity in the Deaf Community: Jessica Lee [Videotape]. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University.

Region X Interpreter Education Center (1999). Understanding Diversity in the Deaf Community: Laurene Gallimore [Videotape]. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University.

Region X Interpreter Education Center (1999). Understanding Diversity in the Deaf Community: Mark Azure [Videotape]. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University.

Region X Interpreter Education Center (1999). Secrets of Successful Presentations When Using Interpreters: Deaf Presenter with Gallimore and Simon [Videotape]. Monmouth, Oregon: Western Oregon University.

These materials are available from the RSA Project and/or the National Clearinghouse on Rehabilitation and Training Materials.

**Other Commercially Available Sign Language/Interpreting Multicultural Videotapes:**

Glorious Hands Foundation (1996). Winning Deaf for Christ & Equipping the Church. Livonia, MI: Glorious Hands.

Gallaudet University. Eli Shepperd's: Plantation Songs Washington, DC: Department of Television, Photography and Educational Technology.

Gallaudet University. Class of '52 Washington, DC: Department of Television, Photography and Educational Technology. Educational Video Network (2000).

Lengua de Señas Mexicana(LSM) Videotapes:

Enseñame (1998). Rutina Diaria: Parte I "Vida Diaria" and Parte II "En la Escuela". Mexico, DF: Enseñame: Lengua de Señas Mexicana.

Enseñame (1998). Narraciones: "El Marino," "El Dibujante Sordo," and "El Maestro Sordo" Mexico DF: Enseñame: Lengua de Señas Mexicana.

Signing Fiesta (2000). Signing Fiesta I, II, III. Address 23 Cherverly, Cir, Cheverly: MD. Email: signfiesta@aol.com