Spring 2016 Berkeley City College-American Sign Language

Project title: FIG: ASL 464 Work Experience Course

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1. What was your **final inquiry question**? If your question evolved over the course of the semester, please briefly describe how it changed.

   - Based on our observation of students, we recognized that many students were struggling to complete the work experience ASL 464 course. Our question: are there any strategies we can find that will help our students to complete the course 464 work experiences in a strong ASL environment?

2. What **existing research** did you find on this topic? Please paste in at least 2 links, and briefly summarize.

   ASL 464 Work Experience is critical because regarding to the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) incorporates the significant five areas when using ASL to interact with Deaf People.

   The Signing Naturally Curriculum Design Approach:

   > *"According to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning provided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), "all the linguistic and social knowledge required for effective human-to-human interaction is encompassed in those ten words 'Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom.'*
   > *Signing Naturally Units curriculum's first and foremost goal of language teaching is to bring a person unable to communicate in ASL to a basic level of communicative competency. Meaningful and appropriate communication is reflected in the design of the Signing Naturally curriculum. The curriculum and the lessons are designed to help the language classrooms and the language programs* **meet the five areas of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities outlined by ACTFL**.*pg ix introduction from units 1-6 & 1-7."* (Smith, Lentz, & Mikos, Signing Naturally Teacher's Curriculum Gudie: Units 1-6, 2008) & (Smith, Lentz, & Mikos, Signing Naturally Teacher's Curriculum Guide Units 7-12, 2014)

   Links:
   Signing Naturally Units 1-6 http://www.dawnsign.com/series/signing-naturally-series/5
   Signing Naturally Units 7-12 http://www.dawnsign.com/series/signing-naturally-units-7-12/15

   Work cited:

Smith, C., E. Lentz, and K. Mikos. Signing Naturally Teacher's Curriculum Units 1-6 & 7-12. 2008 & 2014. Dawn Sign Press. San Diego. Print. Web Retrieved: 5/3/2016. Dawn Sign Press <http://www.dawnsign.com/series/signing-naturally-series/5> & <http://www.dawnsign.com/series/signing-naturally-units-7-12/15>

3. What was your **primary research process**? Please attach or link any relevant documents or tools.

    We sent a survey to our former and current students (approx. 80 students) from Fall 2012 to Spring 2016. Unfortunately, some classes were canceled and only offered once in a year which is why the number of student was low.

    https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vRoOHd6QWKoVX6OarWyxY-_anHfkDWpCo6m2dW6Q0K0/viewform?edit_requested=true#responses

4. Please describe your **key findings** (bullet points are fine). Include any of the following:

    a. What patterns emerged?
        - We gather 21 responses from our students: 45% Part time students, 40% Former students, 10 % Full time students, 5% Other, 0% transfer students and graduate students.

        - The survey shows that 73.7% of students had challenges of trying to complete the requirements for ASL 464. (14 out of 19)

        - The survey shows that students rate their comprehension and expressive signing ASL skills equivalent to completion of:

    ASL comprehension skills 55.6%
    ASL 52 Level 3 (intermediate signer)
    10 out of 18

    ASL expressive signing skills 52.6 %
    ASL 52 Level 3 (intermediate signer)
    10 out of 19.

        - The survey shows that student's main challenges they had experience in ASL 464 course indicates that 47.4% (9 out of 21) are having difficulty finding a placement sites.

        - Most students volunteer working at Deaf Counseling Advocacy Referral Agency (DCARA). Students finds DCARA very beneficial working site to volunteer due to significant exposure uses of ASL to interact with Deaf people.

- Most students expressed their frustration of not being able to find other placement sites other than DCARA and educational settings: mainstreaming and residential school for the Deaf. Because of this, due to lack of availability to volunteer and workplace expectations between ASL students and supervisor. In addition, 120 hours are not met as one of the requirements to complete the course. There are limit options for students to be referred to volunteer at a workplace with a strong ASL environment.

b. What was surprising?

While students are unable to complete the course is because the hours has not met the requirement. Furthermore, there is lacking in various placement sites availability for students to volunteer in a rich ASL environment.

73.7% challenged unable to complete the course thus resulted many student dropped the course (14 out of 19).

47.4% unable to find placement sites to volunteer at to complete 120 hours requirements (9 out of 21).

c. What has led you to ask additional questions?

After realizing that many students are at disadvantage to be able to complete the 120 hours requirement.

We wondered:
    I.   How can we ensure that students are completing the course requirement?
    II.   What are the possible ways to retain our students to complete the course?
    III.   What kind of support can we provide our students?

According to the survey; based on their experience there are factors that are preventing them to complete the course which are: Summary

- They have struggled to find a working site to volunteer in a rich ASL environment.
- They have to look on their own with instructor's help with list of sites.
- They struggled to reach the agency supervisor to request to volunteer.
- They received no responses back from agency or workplaces.
- The placement sites are limited.
- They need support and guidance due to lack mentoring and training to prepare students for work experience.
- They are unable to receive exposure in ASL to develop their signing skills by interacting with Deaf people at the worksite.

d. What has impacted your thinking and work?

We have come up with many ideas such as offering:

     I.   Workshops
     II.   Training
     III.   Mentoring
     IV.   Support system
     V.   Practicum
     VI.   Meet weekly to share their experience, advices, and feedbacks.
     VII.   Collaboratively work with other organizations, educational, and agencies through workshops and job fair to provide students networking for placement referral.

Importantly, students can learn the expectations from the BCC ASL department and placements worksite; its purpose when working with ASL students and Deaf people in an ASL environment. It is critical for students to be exposed ASL by interacting with Deaf people in order for them to develop their ASL skills in both comprehension and expressive.

e. How do your findings relate to the existing research you found on this topic?

Outlined by the ACTFL; the five areas of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities are not met due to lack of finding worksites to volunteer outside of the classroom and need support to make these five 'C' areas stronger for our ASL students.

5. Based on your key findings, secondary research, and discussion, what **recommendations** did you develop? *(It's helpful if some of these are specific enough for you or other people to take up as an APPLE and/or DART in the future).*

*Please refer to number 4; letter d above.

6. What other ideas or areas of **possible future inquiry** does your inquiry suggest?

Develop **survey for worksites** to accept our ASL students to volunteer work also to build a strong connection and network with (vary placement sites) for our future students to work there.

7. What **connections/questions/applications** arose through sharing with other colleagues at the colloquium?

Not applicable

8. Who should know about your findings and what will you do with your recommendations? (*PIE committee, curriculum committee, department colleagues, other departments?)*

As indicated all of above; in addition we also share these findings and results with other ASL faculty from local colleges and/or the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). At Ohlone College ASL/ Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP) Department incorporates work experience as part of their curriculum course for their ASL students as well.