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SANS / SONY INTRODUCES THE VIRTUOSO ALL DIGITAL ASL LANGUAGE LABORATORY SYSTEM



American Sign Language (ASL) is being taught at more and more high schools, colleges, and universities around the country. According to a recent study by the Modern Language Association, the number of higher education ASL programs has grown significantly with an increase of over 400%. American Sign Language has become the 5th most commonly taught language in the United States, followed by Japanese.



To meet the needs of ASL teachers and students, SANS has developed software plug-ins for the Sony Virtuoso™ and Soloist® Suite. Our ASL software, in combination with a PC video capture card and good quality video camera, enables students to do "video comparative recording". Students can work on signing activities and video record themselves digitally. The digital file can be played back immediately in sync with the model by the student or saved for the teacher to review later. Teachers can provide assessment and feedback for students with "video comments". Thanks to this new software, the days of teachers lugging stacks of video tapes for review are over.

In the language lab students and teachers can visually communicate with ease. This is a great tool for teachers to coach students one-on-one or to give instruction easily to the whole class. Just as in the traditional Sony Virtuoso/Soloist digital language lab, students can be paired so that they can practice communicating and can work on assignments together.

(The photo above was taken at the new ASL lab at Flagler College in FL. On-screen is the Sony Soloist Software with the "video window" and video camera mounted on the desk to the right of the PC.)

[Click Here To Learn About More Features In the ASL Technology Suite](#)

Madonna University



Madonna University is one of a few private schools in the country offering a four-year ASL program. Their four-year undergraduate degree program in Sign Language Studies was established in 1975 and consists of two majors: a comprehensive major in Sign Language Studies and a more advanced program in American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting. About 250 to 350 students enroll each semester in ASL classes, and approximately 130 majors are currently pursuing the four-year degree. Madonna University also offers an undergraduate degree in Spanish and a large academic and adult ESL program, resulting from their diverse student population.

"The classroom lab experience with the video proponent is just what we need," explained Ken Rust, Chair of Sign Language Studies. "Real time audio and Video communications will allow the instructors to review students' work and give immediate feedback, facilitating language instruction and response. It will be a useful tool for student self-evaluation and as an assessment tool for faculty. "He added, "The new Virtuoso lab will replace the current method of recording and playing back students' work on VHS tape, which is a time-consuming, outdated mode of learning. The key is that ASL students will be able to see the link between what they do and how they do it. "

The Sony Virtuoso lab will also help Madonna University achieve its goal of creating a digitized portfolio for graduating ASL students. "The lab will allow students to put their best work on DVD - their sign language skills, resume, term papers, etc. - to create a complete portfolio that they can distribute to prospective employers and graduate schools," stated Rust.

(Reprinted from SANS Learning Link Spring 2006)

From the Sign Language Studies Department



As you can see the above article provides information about our new SLS lab. The SLS faculty is receiving training and will be working with students as we continue to highlight our new facilities. Please know that the SLS faculty will be working with you to provide the newest technology available in the area of Sign language education and training. The hours of the SLS will be made available once the Sign Language Studies department, foreign language department and English as a Second Language program have coordinated their schedules for Fall term, 2006. We also hope to expand the hours to include students pursuing their certification as well as professional interpreters in the community, including SLS alumni.

Ken Rust
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Madonna University
9/1/06