

A FORMULA TO MAKE THE SIGN LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION AND TRAINING CENTER (SLDTC) A SUCCESS

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Presentation Description

The presentation describes the project beginning in Fall 2014 at Kapi‘olani Community College, and the impetus behind it. The formula is “ $2 + 2 + 2 = 2$ ”, meaning: “2 Deaf Translators + 2 ASL/English Interpreters + 2 SLDTC Trainer/Consultants, resulting in 2 Video Tutorials in ASL.” The goal of “ $2 + 2 + 2 = 2$ ” is to develop video tutorials in ASL of content presented during the Sign Language Documentation and Training Center (SLDTC) Workshops. It required two iterations of the SLDTC workshop to be completed before realizing that changing how information and materials were presented could improve the workshops’ success.

The project makes the translated lessons and materials from SLDTC Pilot 2 fully accessible in ASL and available electronically. Video tutorials enable new participants to join the training at any time and work independently on their projects. This results in a model that can be replicated and sustained.

The video tutorials in ASL will enhance the experience Deaf participants have during the 10-week workshop and improve their knowledge of Sign Language Linguistics and facility with the language documentation process. Increased access to materials and information related to language documentation will result in an increased number of Deaf participants as potential documenters and increased access to endangered sign languages in Hawai‘i and the Pacific.

Background

Graduate students involved in the Language Documentation Training Center (LDTC) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa were excited when exposed to the recent validation of Hawai‘i Sign Language (HSL) as a distinct and highly endangered language and by their contact with Deaf researchers. This stimulated their goal to document and revitalize HSL, and their quest to document HSL before the last known users die. They realized that adding documentation and training workshops for endangered sign languages was overdue. The newest addition—The SLDTC Workshop—is a compelling and unique collaborative project involving the graduate students, faculty from the UHM Department of Linguistics and Kapi‘olani Community College’s ASL/English Interpreter Education Program, and a content expert in Sign Language Linguistics and Documentation from The Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies at Chinese University, Hong Kong.