



SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW in AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
(SLPI: ASL)

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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October 2007 (3rd ed.)

Approved by: Bridges Oregon, Inc.
Date: February 1, 2021

Table of Contents

	pages
Introduction	1
PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION	1
INTERVIEW	1
RATINGS AND SHARING OF RESULTS	1
USE OF SLPI VIDEOS FOR TRAINING< DEMONSTRATION, AND RESEARCH	2
APPENDIXES	
A. SLPI APPOINTMENT AND INFORMATION MEMO	3
• A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SLIP	4
• SLPI INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES	5
• SLPI TIPS FOR CANDIDATES	6
• SLPI RATING SCALE	7
• SLPI CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE	8
B. SLPI REPORT OF RESULTS MEMO	9
• SLPI RATING SCALE	10
C. SLIP RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM	11
D. PERMISSION TO USE SLPI VIDEOS FOR TRAINING, DEMONSTRATION, AND RESEARCH	12

NATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT (NSLA) POLICY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

As resources allow, National Sign Language Assessment (NSLA) provides community SLPI interviewing, rating, report of results, and follow-up meeting services.

The cost to individuals for these services is one hundred dollars eighty (\$185.00) result letter with no diagnostic feedback, payable at one week advance when the SLPI is scheduled. The full report with diagnostic feedback service is two hundred twenty dollars (\$220.00), in addition, individuals who have taken the SLPI may request an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting.

PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Candidates/persons taking the SLPI receive a memo informing them of their interview dates, times, and locations (see Appendix A, page 3). This memo is sent with:

1. A Brief Description of the SLPI (page 4)
2. SLPI Information for Candidates (page 5)
3. SLPI Tips for Candidates—Provides hints on strategies to use during SLPI in order to do well (page 6)
4. The SLPI Rating Scale (page 7)
5. SLPI Candidate Questionnaire (page 8)

INTERVIEW

The SLPI involves a one-to-one recorded conversation in sign language between an interviewer and candidate/interviewee, with interview content varying according to the background, job responsibilities, schooling, and other interests of each person interviewed. Interviews are generally 20 to 25 minutes in length.

RATINGS AND SHARING OF RESULTS

SLPI interviews are rated independently by SLPI raters. The basis for ratings is the SLPI Rating Scale (page 7), a standard scale based on highly skilled knowledgeable native/native-like signers. Results are reported to persons taking the SLPI in SLPI Report of Results Memos (Appendix B, page 9) as one of the following SLPI Ratings/Rating Ranges:

1. Advanced Plus–Superior Plus Skill Level Range
2. Advanced
3. Intermediate Plus
4. Intermediate
5. Survival Plus
6. Survival
7. Novice Skill Level Range
8. No Functional Skills

Results memos state the option to schedule SLPI Follow-Up Meetings. At SLPI Follow-Up Meetings persons have the opportunity: (a) to review their SLPI videos, (b) to discuss their sign language communication skills, and (c) to discuss suggestions for improving their sign language communication skills.

Sharing of individual SLPI results, with other than persons taking the SLPI, may only be done if persons taking the SLPI signs a release of information form that specifies with whom their SLPI results may be shared (Appendix C, page 11).

USE OF SLPI VIDEOS FOR TRAINING, DEMONSTRATE, AND RESEARCH

SLPI results memos may include a request that persons give permission for their SLPI videos to be used for training demonstration, and research. If a person wishes to give permission s/he signs an attached form and returns it to the NSLA SLPI:ASL Coordinator (Appendix D, page 12). If such permission is not given, SLPI videos are automatically erased 6 months from interview dates. If permission is given to use SLPI videos for training, demonstration, and research, tapes are erased when no longer needed for these purposes.

Appendix A

SLPI APPOINTMENT AND INFORMATION MEMO

To:
From: NAME, NSLA SLPI:ASL Coordinator
CC: NAME, NSLA SLPI:ASL Director
Date:
Subject: Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Appointment & Information

Your SLPI has been scheduled for _____ at _____ in _____.
_____ will be conducting your interview.

Enclosed are the following to help you prepare for your SLPI:

1. A Brief Description of the SLPI (Attachment 1)
2. SLPI Information for Candidates—Explains SLPI procedures and the basis for evaluating your sign language communication skills (Attachment 2)
3. SLPI Tips for Candidates—Provides hints on strategies to use during the SLPI in order to do well (Attachment 3)
4. The SLPI Rating Scale (Attachment 4)

Also enclosed is an SLPI Candidate Questionnaire. We would appreciate if you would fill this out and return it to me prior to your interview (Attachment 5)

Based on your SLPI, you will receive a report of your Sign Language Communication Skills; that is, a rating from No Functional Skills to Advanced Plus–Superior Plus Skill Level Range from the SLPI Rating Scale (see Attachment 4). After receiving your report, if you wish to review your SLPI video and discuss your sign language communication skills, please contact me to schedule an SLPI Follow-Up Meeting. At this follow-up meeting you will have the opportunity (1) to review SLPI video, (2) to discuss your sign language communication skills, and (3) if appropriate, to discuss suggestions for improving your sign language communication skills.

If you have any questions about your scheduled SLPI, please contact me.

Note: We would appreciate it if you would wear medium-to-dark, solid-colored, skin-contrasting clothing to your interview. Please do not wear white or very light-colored clothing. Thank you.

Attachment 1

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)

Drs. Frank Caccamise and William Newell
www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi
September 2007

The SLPI, a conversational approach to sign language communication skills assessment, is based on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) (also known as the Language Proficiency Interview/LPI). Like the O/LPI, the SLPI permits interview content to vary according to the job responsibilities, background, and interests of each person interviewed. Consistent with the O/LPI, the goals of the SLPI are to assess how well people are able to use sign language for their communication needs, and, as appropriate, to assist people in development of their sign language communication skills.

The SLPI involves a one-to-one sign language conversation between the interviewer and candidate/interviewee, with each interviewee recorded and subsequently rated independently by SLPI raters. (See Attachments 2 and 3 for SLPI candidate information and tips.) The basis for ratings is the SLPI Rating Scale (Attachment 4), a standard scale based on highly skilled, knowledgeable native/nativelike signers.

The SLPI assesses sign language as it is used among skilled sign language communicators in the United States. This use includes pure, linguistic descriptions of ASL to English influenced meaning based signing. This full range is characterized by: (a) meaning-based sign language vocabulary selection consistent with standardized signs in current use by skilled language users, and (b) a variety of grammatical features that are consistent with effective use of gestural-visual language for communication. These grammatical features include: (a) space, indexing, eye gaze, sign movement directionality, and body shifts to separate ideas and to identify and discuss persons, places, and objects present and not present; (b) classifiers for describing and representing persons, places, and objects and their movements (for example, use of the index finger to represent a person); (c) sign-word order which facilitates effective communication in gestural-visual language; and (d) facial expressions and other body movements (non-manual signals) to support and add to information communicated (for example, affirmative and negative head movements). In addition to vocabulary and grammatical features, clarity of sign production, fluency, and comprehension are important to effective communication when using a gestural-visual language, and therefore are considered in SLPI ratings. Further explanation of what is assessed by the SLPI is provided in the *SLPI Notebook*, Section 5, *Skills Important for Effective Sign Language Communication and Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Levels* Section 7, PAPER #3, *What Does the SLPI Assess?*. Copies of these papers are available from the PROGRAM SLPI Coordinator.

As we have discussed consistently in SLPI presentations and published materials, follow-up is critical to successful use of the SLPI. SLPI candidates, therefore, are encouraged to schedule SLPI Follow-Up Meetings. During follow-up meetings candidates have the opportunity to meet with sign language specialists to review and discuss their SLPI videos as a basis for planning skill development activities based on their individual communication skills and needs.

Attachment 2

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)
INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

1. We will have a conversation about social and work topics. I will ask you questions, and you may ask me questions.
2. We want to get the best sample of your sign language skills.
3. In order to elicit your best sign language skills, I may ask you to “re-sign” (restate) some responses.
4. We will evaluate your sign language skills, including: (a) vocabulary; (b) clarity and control of sign production; (c) use of sign language grammar (for example, use of space, sign directionality, classifiers, time indicators, and sentence and discourse structure); (d) non-manual behaviors such as facial expressions and body shifts; (e) fluency or smoothness of sign and fingerspelling production; and (f) comprehension (skill in receiving sign language).
5. Please try to maintain a good “signing posture”; that is, please sit upright. This should help you show your best sign language skills.
6. Please answer my questions as completely as possible.

Do you have any questions? Please use sign language.

Note: PLEASE USE YOUR BEST SIGN LANGUAGE.

Attachment 3

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)
TIPS FOR CANDIDATES**

1. **RELAX:** Sip a cup of coffee, rub your hands, talk about the weather—anything that will help you to relax and be confident.
2. **RATE OF SIGNING:** Sign at a rate that is comfortable for you. If you know that you make many mistakes when you sign quickly, slow down.
3. **KEEP SIGNING:** Don't stop the conversation by answering simply YES or NO. Be generous. Give details, explain your point, develop your thoughts, and make comparisons. Anything that shows you can discuss a topic in depth will help you perform better. If you are not a "talkative" person by nature, you must make an extra effort to communicate during the interview.
4. **DON'T DOWNGRADE YOURSELF:** Don't apologize for your signing skills. Be positive. Let the interview show your skills.

WHAT TO DO . . .

1. **IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE:** If you know you made a mistake, correct it and continue. Correcting a mistake can help your performance.
2. **IF YOU ARE LOST IN A LONG EXPLANATION:** Stop. Think. Say something like, "Let me tell you again—it is complicated." Then try again. Don't worry about what happened. No one expects you to sign without mistakes.
3. **IF YOU BECOME NERVOUS DURING THE INTERVIEW:** The interviewer will know you are nervous and help you. You can stop for a few seconds and get control. Relax. Admit that you are nervous and joke about it. Often this is enough to make you comfortable again.
4. **IF SOMETHING IS INTERFERING WITH YOUR SIGNING:** If the air conditioner bothers you, say so. If you can't see the interviewer clearly, say so. Remember that this is your interview. You should have the best possible interview conditions.

Attachment 4
Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale^a

<u>RATINGS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTORS^b</u>
<u>Superior Plus</u>	Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. All aspects of signing are native-like with use of native-like prosody.
<u>Superior</u>	Able to have a fully shared conversation with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. Very broad sign language vocabulary, near native-like production, fluency and prosody and excellent use of sign language grammatical features. Excellent comprehension for normal signing rate.
<u>Advanced Plus</u>	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Advanced</u>	Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics. Broad sign language vocabulary knowledge and clear, accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near-normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate.
<u>Intermediate Plus</u>	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Intermediate</u>	Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproductions. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed.
<u>Survival Plus</u>	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Survival</u>	Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length. Some knowledge of basic sign language vocabulary with many sign vocabulary and/or sign production errors. Slow-to-moderate signing rate. Basic use of a few sign language grammatical features. Fair comprehension for signing produced at a slow-to-moderate rate with some repetition and rephrasing.
<u>Novice Plus</u>	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Novice</u>	Able to provide single sign and some short phrase/sentence responses to basic questions signed at a slow-to-moderate rate with frequent repetition and rephrasing. Vocabulary primarily related to everyday work and/or social areas such as basic work-related signs, family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time. Production and fluency characterized by many sign production errors and by a slow rate with frequent inappropriate pauses/hesitations.
<u>No Functional Skills</u>	(May be) Able to provide short single sign and “primarily” fingerspelled responses to some basic questions signed at a slow rate with extensive repetition and rephrasing.

^aAdapted from US Foreign Service Institute & ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by William Newell & Frank Caccamise

^bFor all SCPI rating descriptors, **first statement (in bold type) always a statement of ASL communicative functioning**, with all remaining statements (regular type) descriptors of ASL form (vocabulary, production, fluency, grammar, and comprehension). January 2020 (revised edition)

Attachment 5

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE (Before Interview)**

Drs. Frank Caccamise and William Newell
September 2007

Please fill in the information requested below and return to your supervisor. Your supervisor will then forward your completed form to the NSLA SLPI:ASL, Bridges Oregon, Inc. P.O. Box 1112 Salem, OR 97308 or send an email to nsla@bridgesoregon.org. Thank you.

Note: All responses for individuals are used with strict confidentiality; that is, no individuals will be identified in any reports generated based on the information provided on this form.

1. Name:
2. Date:
3. Mailing Addresses (US Postal and email):
4. Deaf ____ Hard-of-Hearing ____ Hearing
5. Age began to learn/acquire Sign:
6. Please rate your ASL skills by circling or underlining one of the numbers below:

1	2	3	4	5
no skills	basic skills	fair skills	good skills	excellent skills

7. Other information you wish to share with us relative to your sign language skills (how you learned sign language, situations in which you use sign language, etc.):

Appendix B

**SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI)
REPORT OF RESULTS MEMO**

To:
From: NAME, NSLA SLPI:ASL Coordinator
CC: NAME, NSLA SLPI: ASL Director
Date:
Subject: Your SLPI Results

Your rating for your MONTH DAY YEAR Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is _____ . The SLPI Rating Scale attached will help you understand your rating.

If you wish to review your SLPI interview tape and discuss your sign language communication skills, please contact the NSLA SLPI:ASL, Bridges Oregon, Inc. P.O. Box 1112 Salem, OR 97308, or send an email to nsla@bridgesoregon.org to schedule an NSLA SLPI Follow-Up Meeting. At this meeting you will have the opportunity (a) to review your SLPI video, (b) to discuss your sign language communication skills, and (c) to discuss suggestions and opportunities for improving your sign language communication skills if appropriate. You should request this meeting within two weeks from the date you receive this SLPI rating report.

Also, attached is a form requesting permission to use your SLPI video for training, demonstration, and research. Please consider completing this form and returning it to me. Thank you.

Attachment 6
Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) Rating Scale^a

<u>RATINGS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTORS^b</u>
<u>Superior Plus</u>	Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. All aspects of signing are native-like with use of native-like prosody.
<u>Superior</u>	Able to have a fully shared conversation with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. Very broad sign language vocabulary, near native-like production, fluency and prosody and excellent use of sign language grammatical features. Excellent comprehension for normal signing rate.
<u>Advanced Plus</u>	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Advanced</u>	Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics. Broad sign language vocabulary knowledge and clear, accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near-normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate.
<u>Intermediate Plus</u>	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Intermediate</u>	Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproductions. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed.
<u>Survival Plus</u>	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Survival</u>	Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length. Some knowledge of basic sign language vocabulary with many sign vocabulary and/or sign production errors. Slow-to-moderate signing rate. Basic use of a few sign language grammatical features. Fair comprehension for signing produced at a slow-to-moderate rate with some repetition and rephrasing.
<u>Novice Plus</u>	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not <u>all</u> and not <u>consistently</u> .
<u>Novice</u>	Able to provide single sign and some short phrase/sentence responses to basic questions signed at a slow-to-moderate rate with frequent repetition and rephrasing. Vocabulary primarily related to everyday work and/or social areas such as basic work-related signs, family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time. Production and fluency characterized by many sign production errors and by a slow rate with frequent inappropriate pauses/hesitations.
<u>No Functional Skills</u>	(May be) Able to provide short single sign and “primarily” fingerspelled responses to some basic questions signed at a slow rate with extensive repetition and rephrasing.

^aAdapted from US Foreign Service Institute & ACTFL LPI Rating Scales by William Newell & Frank Caccamise

^bFor all SCPI rating descriptors, **first statement (in bold type) always a statement of ASL communicative functioning**, with all remaining statements (regular type) descriptors of ASL form (vocabulary, production, fluency, grammar, and comprehension). January 2020 (revised edition)

Appendix C

**NSLA RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM FOR SHARING
SIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (SLPI) RESULTS**

I authorize Bridges Oregon Inc's National Sign Language Assessment (NSLA) to disclose my SLPI results with the following individuals/groups (please include their names and their email addresses).

1.

2.

3.

4.

I understand that:

1. This authorization to release information will remain in effect until I revoke it in writing
2. This content does not permit the recipients to authorize the release of my information to a third party
3. This is a standing consent and will not result in a release of information unless requested by the recipients listed above.

My signature below is my permission for NSLA to share my SLPI results as requested above.

Candidate Signature

Printed Name

Date

Please return this form to NSLA

Appendix D

**National Sign Language Assessment (NSLA)
Sign Language Proficiency Interview in American Sign Language
SLPI: ASL**

**PERMISSION TO USE NSLA SLPI:ASL VIDEOS
FOR TRAINING, DEMONSTRATION, AND RESEARCH**

Dear Candidate:

In order to help ensure we are able to provide quality SLPI:ASL services, in-service training is provided for the National Sign Language Assessment SLPI:ASL team members, and training is sometimes necessary to add additional SLPI:ASL team members. In addition, persons who may/will be taking the SLPI:ASL often request the opportunity to see examples of signers who achieve each of the SLPI:ASL rating levels.

Given the above, we wish to request your permission to use your SLPI:ASL Interview video to assist us in conducting SLPI:ASL training, demonstration, and/or research.

If you are willing to give us permission, please sign below and return this form to NSLA SLPI:ASL Coordinator at nsla@bridgesoregon.org.

My signature below signifies my granting permission to Bridges Oregon, Inc's National Sign Language Assessment to use my SLPI:ASL video for training, demonstration and/or research purposes.

Candidate Signature

Printed Name

Date

NSLA SLPI:ASL Director Signature

Printed Name

Date