ABSTRACT

Using Vodcasting Technology to Improve Student Retention, Persistence, and Success in American Sign Language

Need for the Professional Growth - describe the purpose of the sabbatical leave. The purpose of the sabbatical is to develop guidelines for using vodcasting technology to improve student retention, persistence, and success in American Sign Language. A project of this magnitude is only feasible with a sabbatical leave; the project will run from December 2010 to December 2012. A sabbatical will not only give the applicant the opportunity to do the research, including a detailed review of the literature, conduct site visits at 2 and 4 year colleges currently using vodcasting, write guidelines for developing and publishing vodcasts, it will also give the applicant the opportunity to work with professionals using vodcasting and to take a vodcasting course. In addition, completion of these activities will result in the ability of the applicant to train ASL faculty and teaching assistants to use the equipment in the state-of-the-art American Sign Language classrooms.

Sabbatical Leave Activities - describe what you plan to do. Developing and publishing vodcasts using existing student generated content models requires guidelines for faculty and students. The guidelines need to include legal requirements and ADA compliance concerns. This sabbatical work will: 1) create guidelines for developing and publishing faculty and student generated American Sign Language (ASL) video projects, 2) develop an evaluation rubric for all vodcasts, 3) provide the applicant with the needed opportunity to increase and develop new technology skills for classroom based instruction enabling the applicant to train ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants, and, 4) create a vodcast library as an important resource for the possibility of developing American Sign Language blended courses.

Anticipated Outcomes - describe the primary outcome; instructor and classroom outcomes; professional/faculty relationship outcome; student outcomes. The primary outcome will be “Guidelines for the Development and Publishing of Faculty and Student Generated Videos” which will be piloted in ASL courses, revised and shared with all disciplines using vodcasting technology. In addition, ASL faculty will be trained on how to use existing technology, classroom filming sites, student content models and how they apply to the creation of video projects, and how to use the guidelines. Training will enhance faculty classroom effectiveness. Research on vodcasting, as a review strategy, has demonstrated an increase in student skill acquisition and content understanding, resulting in an increase in student retention, persistence, and success. Vocasts are an especially important tool for a visual language in which there are no commercially available study aids.

Means of Measurement. The completed guidelines, used in the ASL program and shared with all disciplines using vodcasting technology, the series of ASL faculty training workshops, and vodcasting course completion certificate, will demonstrate the project outcomes have been achieved.

Expected Benefits. Given that ASL is a visual language, vocasts will provide a unique, and outstanding, opportunity for ASL students to practice and develop their sign language skills. The greatest benefit comes from the fact that given there are no quality commercially available review activities for students and none that follow the ASL program curriculum and standards, the vocasts are unique and directly applicable to their learning. The proposed sabbatical leave activity supports the following Cuyamaca College core values: academic excellence, student access and success, innovation and creativity (using cutting edge production and distribution technology), and diversity and social harmony (Deaf culture and Deaf community). There will be considerable gain from having community/public access to vocasts, produced by Cuyamaca College faculty and students. There will be an online ability to introduce the community to our programs and courses in a broad-based format easily accessible and frequently used by students and potential students i.e. iTunes.
PROPOSAL:

Using Vodcasting Technology to Improve Student Retention, Persistence, and Success in American Sign Language

As you prepare this proposal, it is also strongly recommended that you consult with the Department Chair/Coordinator and Dean prior to submittal to address any issues or to provide additional information or clarification regarding the proposal. Please answer each question completely (do not say "please see above").

Need for Sabbatical

1. How does your proposed activity meet the need for professional and personal growth?

Developing and publishing vodcasts¹ using existing student generated content models requires guidelines for faculty and students. This activity will:

1) create guidelines for developing and publishing faculty and student generated American Sign Language (ASL) video projects,

2) develop an evaluation rubric for all vodcasts,

3) provide the applicant with the opportunity to increase and develop new technology skills for classroom based instruction which will not only greatly enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction, but also enable the applicant to train ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants, and

4) create a vodcast library that would be an important resource for the development of American Sign Language blended courses.

The goal of creating vodcasted projects is to provide online means for improving ASL students’ retention, persistence, and success. Video projects will be posted on public access websites through a process known as vodcasting (video-on-demand). Using the guidelines developed by this project, students would be taught how to access and use vodcasts during classroom activities. The primary purpose of the vodcasts, however, is for students to have the ability to access the vodcasts on their personal electronic video devices, their laptop computers and their desktop computers. Such easy and student friendly access gives students the opportunity to use ASL program developed and approved instructional materials. By video, students will be able to review ASL lectures, ASL vocabulary, grammar and culture lessons, practice signs and handshapes, and view ASL performances to intended develop students receptive sign language skills. Given ASL is a visual language, vodcasts will be invaluable resources.

¹vodcasts: a term used for the online delivery of video content via RSS enclosures or feeds. Access to these projects differs from content posted in course management systems, such as Blackboard, where the content is only for students enrolled in a specific course and is managed by a faculty member.
For projects generated by trained ASL faculty and teaching assistants, the guidelines would be applied to all Cuyamaca College identified instructional projects where ASL lessons, ASL fingerspelling drills, and ASL lectures are filmed and posted on free public access sites such as iTunes. Projects can also be posted on iTunesU with free access for students. In addition, the guidelines would be applied to all student generated content video projects. One purpose of the guidelines is to assure that all projects are in compliance with legal requirements, including access as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

All American Sign Language faculty will benefit from being trained in the skills needed to produce faculty and student generated video projects and have the “discipline sanctioned” guidelines for developing and publishing the projects. Thus, this project also contributes to the professional growth and development of ASL faculty.

The research needed to produce quality guidelines will add to over 30 years of work in studying student retention, persistence, and success including a master’s thesis and a doctoral dissertation. The shift, however, is from traditional instructional techniques to the use of student friendly, and accessible, technology. The core work will be done between January 2011 and August 2011, with the total activity scheduled from December 2010 to December 2012.

A project of this magnitude is only feasible with a sabbatical leave. A sabbatical will not only give the applicant the opportunity to do the research, including a review of the literature, conduct site visits at 2 and 4 year colleges currently using vodcasting, develop and publish the proposed guidelines, and receive feedback from on-campus programs creating “student generated video projects,” it will also give the applicant the opportunity to work with professionals using vodcasting (including a site visit to Boston University, a leader in vodcasting technology and Gallaudet University, the world’s only liberal arts university for the Deaf). The applicant will start the sabbatical by taking a requisite vodcasting course. (The applicant understands the concept and application of vodcasting, the course is necessary for the applicant to be able to produce and publish video projects for vodcasting. Along with the other features of the sabbatical activity, knowledge and learning from the vodcasting course is necessary to create the guidelines. This is not a course of study the applicant could pursue during the regular academic year.)

The applicant is the only “full time” instructor in American Sign Language but has a shared assignment in the History, Social and Behavioral Sciences Department as the only “full time instructor in Sociology. The applicant also serves as a volunteer discipline coordinator for the American Sign Language Program. Without a sabbatical leave, this work could not be undertaken.
2. How does your proposed activity benefit (please address at least three of the following):

   a. the students?

   Given that ASL is a visual language, vodcasts will provide a unique, and outstanding, opportunity for ASL students to practice and develop their sign language skills. There are many benefits of students being able to access “program approved videos,” however, the greatest benefit comes from the fact that there are no quality commercially available review activities for students and none that follow the ASL program curriculum and standards. (This is unlike the situation for spoken foreign language where there are many support materials available.)

   Vodcasted projects are easily accessible to students through the desktop and laptop computers and through video personal electronic devices (e.g. iPod Touch, MP3 players). The portable and on-demand nature of vodcasting makes it possible for students to review ASL on their own schedule and in an almost limitless number of locations. The video component allows students to see handshapes and ASL signs.

   The goal of this project is develop guidelines to ensure student or faculty generated vodcasts help to improve student retention, persistence and success in American Sign Language (ASL) by maintaining academic excellence with the use of technology. Through a Fall 2009 Program Review assessment, 95 percent of 247 students said that products from vodcasting technology (including student generated videos) would be something they would use to study American Sign Language.

   As applied from the work done by Dr. James Moore, DePaul University, being able to study and review American Sign Language, through vodcasting technology, would greatly benefit American Sign Language students. (A preliminary review of the literature includes work published by James Moore, DePaul University presenting at the 14th Annual Sloan-C International Conference on Online Learning. Dr. Moore writes that vodcasting is a tool that improves learning by making content available for student review. He asserts that repetition can aid learning and that vodcasting makes content available for students who missed class thus extending reach and communication. He continues by noting an added benefit to students is the fact that vodcasting can improve the way an instructor teaches including the preparation for creating a video project.)

   b. the institution?

   “Learning for the Future” is the vision statement that guides program and services development at Cuyamaca College. As part of the mission statement the college provides for instructional programs that meet student needs through several academic options. The American Sign language program is one of the instructional programs that provides for transfer education (Humanities and Foreign Language), career and technical education (core course for the Interpreter degree at other community colleges), general education (Humanities, electives) and programs that support cultural development (all ASL courses include a specific concentration on the Deaf community and Deaf culture with a focus on similarities and differences between American hearing culture and American Deaf culture).
The proposed sabbatical leave activity supports the following Cuyamaca College core values: academic excellence, student access and success, innovation and creativity (using cutting edge production and distribution technology), and diversity and social harmony (Deaf culture and Deaf community).

The guidelines produced from the research and applicant training, will provide direction on the procedures needed for students and faculty to produce video projects that will be vodcast through sources such as iTunes (public, free posting of Podcast/Vodcasts) and iTunesU. In addition to District policies, college policies and department policies, there are a myriad of issues to research and document so that only quality, “approved,” projects are posted for student use. The guidelines will include an evaluation rubric for all vodcasts. Another purpose of the guidelines is to assure that all projects are in compliance with legal requirements including access as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and appropriate student release forms.

The applicant is a member of the college’s iTunes Task Force that is looking at publication issues. However, no guidelines or documents have been created for the classroom instructor and students wanting to produce vodcasts using a student generated content model. In addition, several college departments currently have the technology for producing faculty and student generated video projects, specifically laptop backpacks. These departments include Science and Engineering (ten disciplines), English as a Second Language, and disciplines using the equipment housed in the Learning Resource Center. Selected college faculty have had the opportunity to take workshops on the student generated content models and were introduced to information on how to create student generated video projects, but no department nor discipline, has created guidelines for developing and publishing the projects.

Whereas, specific content guidelines will be developed for ASL, all documents and processes will be created in such a way they can easily be adapted for use in other disciplines interested in using this technology. (Note: The applicant also teaches in the History, Social and Behavioral Science department as the only “full time” instructor in Sociology. The applicant is committed to making the project user friendly for colleagues in that five discipline department. It is anticipated that this will greatly benefit the institution as the product of the sabbatical leave proposal creates an opportunity for interdisciplinary use.

c. the community

The sabbatical leave activity will primarily benefit students, the institution, and the applicant’s contribution to the body of learning (scholarship) within the discipline. However, it is anticipated that there will be considerable gain from having community/public access to vodcasts, produced by Cuyamaca College faculty and students. There will be an online ability to introduce the community to our programs and courses in a broad-based format easily accessible and frequently used by students and potential students i.e. iTunes.

In addition, the individual colleges and District are finalizing agreements to have Cuyamaca College and Grossmont College sites on iTunesU. The original request to have a Cuyamaca College iTunesU site came from the American Sign Language program during the Communication Arts building planning and development and their work with Apple education representatives. The sabbatical leave proposals ties this planning, which included the new
equipment, to the need to create guidelines for developing and publishing vodcasts, and, training ASL faculty and teaching assistants.

When the iTunesU sites are set up, Cuyamaca College and Grossmont College will be joining nationally recognized private universities (e.g. Oxford, Yale, Johns Hopkins, Boston University, Stanford, USC), recognized public universities (of the UCs, Berkeley, Davis, Irvine and UCLA) and local community colleges (only Southwestern is on iTunesU which puts Grossmont College and Cuyamaca College in the forefront of other SDICCCA institutions) in promoting college programs and course offerings, as well as providing access to vodcasts.

d. the discipline/contribution to scholarship

The applicant has studied various aspects of the Deaf community and Deaf culture for over 30 years. The applicant’s master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation investigated student retention issues at Gallaudet University (the world’s only liberal arts university for the Deaf). The underlying research for both these projects involved studying the Deaf community and Deaf culture as well as learning American Sign Language.

Researching the use of vodcasting as an instructional tool for language acquisition with the intent of increasing student retention will add to a body of knowledge and skills developed over a 30 year time period. Current students are fluent in technology languages and move easily between environments such as “YouTube,” “Facebook,” and “Twitter.” Investigating the use of the Student Generated Content Model to create “faculty and student generated video projects,” will help the discipline make an instructional shift that uses student friendly technology as a retention strategy.

In addition to a review of the literature and site visits to selected higher education institutions using vodcasting for student success, the applicant will complete a course of study in vodcasting, learning vodcasting theory as applied to student retention and persistence, technical skills to create video projects for vodcasting and technical skills for publishing video projects as vodcasts.

3. Describe the relevancy of your activity to your current/new assignment and the improvement of student learning.

The benefit of this sabbatical activity is integrally tied to the applicant’s current assignment. The ability to develop and create faculty and student generated videos is the result of five years of planning to reach the capability to develop and publish vodcasts in new state-of-the-art American Sign Language classrooms complete with a video production studio design.

The applicant has a long history of professional training in workshop facilitation including having served as the founding chair of the AB1725 Staff Development Committee and co-author of the original Staff Development Plan. The applicant has trained, mentored and coached ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants throughout her 15 year assignment in the discipline. The sabbatical activity includes three separate workshop series (Training “Laptop Backpack” Technology, Training on “Student Content Model” and Video Project Creation, Training on Development and Publishing of Student Generated Videos using the newly created guidelines).
The applicant has served as the volunteer American Sign Language discipline coordinator for the past 15 years. During that time the program has grown from two courses to seven courses, from two sections to 15 sections (prior to mandated course reductions), from the applicant as a “full time instructor” (part time assignment), to the applicant and seven adjunct instructors.

For the past five years, the applicant was the lead instructor in the design and development of the beautiful new American Sign Language classrooms, workroom, and public space in the Communication Arts building. The classrooms are extraordinary and were planned to include state-of-the art technology including an equipment library containing “backpack laptops” for faculty and students to use to create “faculty and student generated” video projects.

Working with Apple education representatives, the classrooms are supported by two Apple servers for storing video projects and the public space houses three flat screen monitors for displaying rotating video projects through Apple TV hardware and software.

The new classrooms were also designed as lab spaces to serve as studios for filming “faculty and student generated video projects.” This activity is integral to the use of the new spaces and technology to improve student retention, persistence, and success in American Sign Language. The discipline has long recognized that there are no suitable commercially available support and review materials for American Sign Language, specifically how ASL is taught so it satisfies the Humanities requirement and Foreign Language requirement. Commercial products are designed for the general public serving as resources for entertainment or avocational use. The majority of home generated YouTube videoclips use Signing Exact English, or some variant, not American Sign Language and are never sanctioned for review activities.

The vodcasts that will be created, under the guidelines for developing and publishing vodcasts will meet the academic excellence standards the discipline has established as well as providing students with discipline approved resource materials. The guidelines will include an evaluation rubric for all vodcasts. Published vodcasts will include, but not be limited to, ASL lectures, ASL vocabulary, grammar and culture lessons, practice signs and handshapes, and ASL performances to intended develop students receptive sign language skills.

A key component of using vodcasting technology is the ease with which students can access the review materials. The primary purpose of the vodcasts is for students to have the ability to access the vodcasts on their personal electronic video devices, their laptop computers and/or their desktop computers. Students would be taught how to access and use vodcasts during classroom activities. Such easy, and student friendly, access gives students the opportunity to use ASL program developed and approved instructional materials almost any place in a format that most students can readily learn or are already familiar. There is no need for DVDs or videotapes, no need for DVD players or VCRs. There is no cost to the student to create or access these critical review materials. All students have free access to college operated computer labs.

With discipline created and approved easily accessible, in multiple environments, student support and review materials with no cost to students, the benefit to students is significant. For example, one benefit is that students using vodcasts will be able to do receptive skill
practice resulting in improved quiz and test scores. Another benefit is that students using vodcasts will improve their written tests by being able to review signed lectures on the Deaf community and Deaf culture. A compelling benefit is that students who miss class can view the signed lecture and vocabulary lesson so they do not fall behind in their studies.

With the ability to vodcast “faculty and student generated videos,” the sabbatical leave activity not only benefits the applicant and all ASL students, it benefits ASL faculty and teaching assistants as well.

**Description of Overall Activity**

4. **Please provide a brief description and purpose of the proposed sabbatical leave activity.**

Developing and publishing vodcasts using existing student generated content models requires guidelines for faculty and students. This activity will 1) create guidelines for developing and publishing faculty and student generated American Sign Language (ASL) video projects and 2) develop evaluation rubric for all vodcasts, 3) provide the applicant with the opportunity to increase and develop new technology skills for classroom based instruction which will not only greatly enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction, but also enable the applicant to train ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants. 4) create a vodcast library that would be an important resource for the development of American Sign Language blended courses.

In three separate workshop series, ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants will be (1) trained in using the equipment, (2) taught how to create video projects, and (3) trained in publishing the projects using the guidelines created by the sabbatical leave activity.

The guidelines will include key information on legal requirements, student release documents, and ADA accessibility requirements. Whereas the content in the guidelines will be discipline specific, the documents will be created in such a way that they will be readily adaptable for inter-disciplinary use. There are at least 20 disciplines either have the technology, or have access to the technology, to create faculty and student generated videos.

5. **Please provide a clearly defined set of objectives and the course of action to achieve those objectives that are consistent with the purpose and nature of the proposed leave.**

1. enroll and complete vodcasting course

2. select two and four year institutions currently using vodcasting technology and review the process and applications (ways vodcasts are used)

3. select sample institutions for site visits and meetings with users

4. review the use of “faculty and student generated video projects” at selected institutions including any institutional guidelines for posting projects to public access sites (e.g. iTunes)

5. identify best practices and use those practices to create guidelines for faculty and students for the development and publishing of “faculty and student generated videos”
6. train American Sign Language faculty in the equipment needed to create “faculty and student generated videos”

7. train American Sign Language faculty in how to create video projects including legal requirements including ADA access compliance

8. train American Sign Language workshops in publishing video projects

9. pilot the guidelines for the development and publishing of “faculty student generated videos” and revise as needed

10. share the guidelines with faculty in other disciplines intending to develop and publish “faculty and student generated videos”

11. critique the guidelines through an evaluation panel composed of faculty who tested the guidelines in their disciplines

12. revise guidelines and publish in completed form

6. Please address the feasibility of the activity by discussing:

   a. proposed timeline that is appropriate to the activity, and

The core of this project will be completed during the Spring and Summer of 2011 including the completion of the vodcasting course (applicant is prepared to pay tuition and materials), the site visits (applicant is prepared to pay travel expenses), the review of best practices and the creation of draft guidelines for developing and publishing faculty student generated videos. In addition, applicant-conducted training workshops for all ASL adjunct faculty and teaching assistants will be held by the end of Fall 2011. The rest of the project, including piloting the guidelines within the ASL program, and other disciplines considering the use of vodcasting “student generated video projects,” will be completed by Fall 2012.

1. By January 2011 enroll in vodcasting course

2. By December 2010 select two and four year institutions currently using vodcasting technology and review the process and applications

3. By December 2010 select sample institutions for site visits and by June 2011 complete meetings with users

4. By June 2011 review the use of “faculty and student generated video projects” at these institutions including posting projects to public access sites (e.g. iTunes)

5. By June 2011 identify best practices and use those practices to guidelines for faculty and students for the development and publishing of “faculty and student generated videos.”
6. By the end of Fall of 2011 conduct training workshops for American Sign Language faculty in using equipment needed to create “faculty and student generated videos.”

7. By the end of Fall of 2011 conduct training workshops for American Sign Language faculty in how to create video projects including legal requirements.

8. By the end of Fall of 2011 conduct training workshops for American Sign Language faculty in publishing video projects.

9. By December 2011 pilot the guidelines for the development and publishing of “faculty and student generated videos” and revised as needed.

10. By Spring of 2012 share guidelines with faculty in other disciplines intending to develop and publish “faculty and student generated videos”.

11. By Summer 2012 critique the guidelines through an evaluation panel composed of faculty users who tested the guidelines in their disciplines.

12. By Fall 2012 revise guidelines and publish in completed form.

b. the availability of appropriate resources

The technology needed for students to create student generated videos is part of the American Sign Language program equipment. This includes “laptop backpacks” with iMac laptops, Sanyo video cameras, tripods, and cables. Students will upload their video into iMovies software, edit and have the project ready for publication.

During the design of the new Communications Arts building, the ASL program requested two Apple servers which are now available to be used to function as the servers connected to the internet (the compressed movie file has to be placed on a server, an XML file is then created which, for this use, will allow the projects to be accessed through iTunes. Cuyamaca College and Grossmont College are completing agreements with Apple to have iTuneU sites. Until those agreements are completed, “student generated video projects” can be placed in the podcast/vodcast area of iTunes (free subscription).

ASL Adjunct faculty complete more than the required Staff Development hours in attending the ASL Retreat held every semester. However faculty have committed to attending the three series of workshops that will come from the sabbatical leave activity and will be conducted by the applicant.

There are no professional development funds available to cover travel and educational costs. The applicant is prepared to pay tuition and materials expenses for a vodcasting course, travel expenses to Boston and Washington, D.C. and travel expenses to selected California community colleges and universities. The applicant is also committed to conducting three separate series of workshops for ASL faculty and teaching assistants (Training “Laptop Backpack” Technology, Training on “Student Content Models” and Video Project Creation, Training on Development and Publishing of Student Generated Videos using the newly created guidelines).
The applicant is also committed to completing the sabbatical activity on her own time. The activity is scheduled to run through Fall of 2012, unpaid time in Summer 2011 and Summer 2012 is committed.

**Outcomes**

7. **Clearly describe the expected outcomes of your activity.**

1) Completion of Vodcasting course.

2) Review of the literature, site visits to selected 2 and 4-year colleges and universities using vodcasting.

3) Training workshop for ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistants on “Laptop Backpack” Technology.

4) Training workshop for ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistants on “Student Content Model” and Video Project Creation.

5) Training workshop for ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistants on the Development and Publishing of Student Generated Videos using guidelines that include legal requirements, student release information, ADA access compliance, and an evaluation rubric for all vodcasts.

6) Completed “Guidelines for the Development and Publishing of Faculty and Student Generated Videos” which have piloted in ASL courses and shared with all disciplines using vodcasting technology and publishing vodcasts.

8. **What evidence will you submit to demonstrate achievement of your outcomes?**

1) Vodcasting course completion certificate

2) Training Agenda for the ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistant “Laptop Backpack” Technology Workshop

3) Training Agenda for the ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistant “Student Content Model” and Video Project Creation Workshop

4) Training Agenda for ASL Faculty and Teaching Assistant Development and Publishing of Student Generated Videos Workshop

5) Completed “Guidelines for the Development and Publishing of Faculty and Student Generated Videos”
APPENDIX A
Sample Reading and Research List

Printed References


Breen, Christopher. *How to create a vodcast*, Macworld, July 26, 2005.


Greer, Ruth. *Social Interdependence in Collaborative Interactivity in an Internet Based Learning Environment*, University of South Australia, 2006.


**Online References—Legal Information on Vodcasting**

http://www.creativecommons.org

http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu

http://www.eff.org

http://www.chillingeffects.org

http://publicknowledge.org

http://www.copyright.gov

http://www.uspto.gov

http://www.schwimmerlegal.com

**Online References—Student Content Model**


http://www.studentgenerated.com/Main/Main.html

http://www.developingteachers.com/ A website for the language teacher.