



# Learning Challenges in Underserved Communities

Best Practices in Addressing Learning Challenges in Children Who are Deaf or Dyslexic

Oklahoma Senate Education Committee

LCDD-SMITH Program Management Consultant LLC provides Project Management and Business Development on National Education Projects, ASL Video Production and Small Business Contracts. LCDD offers procurement, contract, and finance management.

Larry has over 15 years of Senior Program Management experience working with State Assessment in Washington State Language Proficiency Test, Arizona’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and Houston Independent School District..

Larry D. Smith, Director of Program Management and Business Development was selected to manage the creation of American Sign Language (ASL) videos Grade k-12 for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium 2013

Larry helped develop the process for the production staff, which included native signers – Born deaf, CODA signers – Child of deaf adult, Certified and Advance Certified interpreters, and a team of Videographers. The video component team created over 10,000 ASL videos for Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

LCDD-Smith, Vice President of Alamo Kreativ Video Production (AKVP). AKVP produces ASL videos for educational assessment companies. AKVP provides ASL video that specializes in interpreting testing for deaf and hard of hearing students. AKVP offer Closed Captioning, and Audio Recording on ASL videos. Alamo Kreativ Video Production has three complete video studios for filming ASL Education videos.



President  
**LCDD-Smith Consultant LLC**

Vice President  
**Alamo Kreativ Video  
Productions LLC**

# About Us

Larry received the individual advocacy award form San Antonio Independent Living Services (S.A.I.L.S.) for his work supporting equitable access for the disabled. He has helped to teach those in educational testing about special needs populations.



**Larry has Managed ASL Video Assessment Programs listed below from 2013 - 2021**

**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

- SBAC 2013-2014 Admin – 1,000 videos
- SBAC 2013-20142014 Practice Test Math – 5,000 videos
- SBAC 2013-2014 Practice Test ELA – 5,000 videos

**Kansas University CTE**

- KU CTE 2015 Math – 147 videos
- KU CTE 2015 Science – 133
- KU CTE 2015 ELA – 125

**Utah AIR**

- Utah 2016 Listening OP – 138

**FDOE AIR**

- FDOE 2016 ELA Practice Test – 265

**AZ Merit AIR**

- FDOE 2016 ELA OP Listening videos – 185
- FDOE 2016 ELA PT Listening videos – 185

**Texas**

- STAAR 2019 Admin – 993 videos
- STAAR 2019 December videos – 6 videos
- STAAR 2020 ELA Refresh videos – 207 videos

**California**

- ELPAC 2020 Admin – 1,170 videos
- ELPAC 2021 Admin (to date) – 284 videos

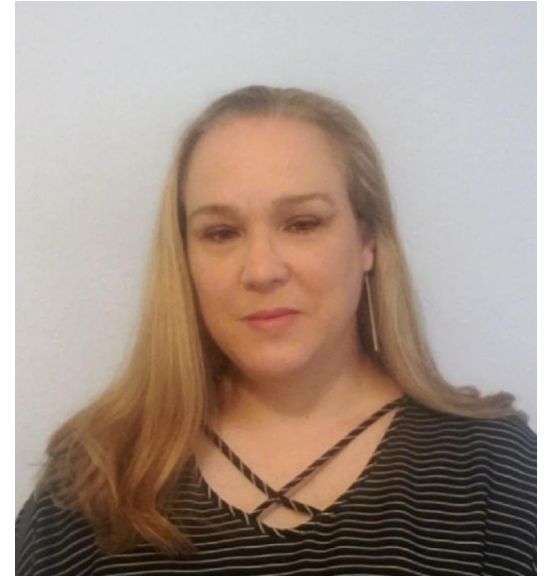
**Maryland**

- MCAP 2020 Admin – 97 videos
- MCAP 2021 Practice Test – 248 videos
- MCAP 2021 Dec Op Test – 86 videos
- MCAP 2021 SS reshoots – 4 videos
- MCAP 2021 Science – 127 videos

# ASL Videos

Summary of American Sign Language (ASL)  
Videos Produced 2013 - 2020  
National Assessment Companies

Robyn G Fohlmeister started her journey in education as a math teacher in Elgin, TX. Having specific certifications in math allowed her to teach math to students in grades 4th through 8th, and she taught each one of those grade levels at some point in time. Most of her teaching career was focused in 5th grade math (and occasionally social studies). Realizing that just a basic content curriculum would not be enough to reach all students and noticing those that were falling behind, she piloted and then implemented a program using Fantasy Football statistics to teach students fractions and decimals, seeing a significant improvement in their understanding of both concepts and culminating in mastery level scores on the end of year state standardized test. Robyn taught in the rural Elgin Independent School District for 4 years and then moved to San Antonio, TX where she taught on Lackland Air Force Base for Lackland Independent School District for 3 years before leaving the classroom.



Leaving the classroom in 2013, Robyn joined Educational Testing Services (ETS) as an assessment specialist in math. Her first 3 years at ETS were focused on writing test questions and building test forms for grades 4 and 5 in math. In her 4<sup>th</sup> year, Robyn took on the task of accommodating math tests for both content needs and for language needs. The following year, the state of Texas opted to combine the test with the separate accommodations into one content and language accommodated test form. Robyn accommodated all math forms (grades 3 through Algebra 1) for the state of Texas test for the next 3 years. During this period of accommodations work, Robyn was promoted to Manager of Accommodations and tasked with piloting both Refreshable Braille and American Sign Language videos to the Texas tests. This work encouraged Robyn to begin learning American Sign Language, and she is currently enrolled at San Antonio College at night to learn ASL.

Robyn has been awarded recognitions for her hard work and dedication to quality at ETS, as well as an award for outstanding volunteer work outside of normal work hours. She also attended and graduated the Dale Carnegie Leadership for Management Training program in October of 2018.

## About Us

"My goal is that every student is given the opportunity to learn, in an equitable way, by meeting the student's individual needs."  
*Robyn Fohlmeister*



Samantha Ferrell is a freelance Certified Interpreter and consultant based out of San Antonio, Texas, contracting services to medical, mental health and educational institutions from coast to coast in the United States. Samantha contracts as a Content Specialist and Quality Control Reviewer for Alamo Kreativ Production Company.

Samantha has been selected to participate in exclusive DOE RSA grant programs such as the Center for Atypical Language Interpreting 2021 Program of Study as a Supervisor, and DeafBlind Interpreting National Training & Resource Center's 2019 DeafBlind Interpreting Institute; as well as the Alabama Department of Mental Health's Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Training and Practicum. Samantha was instrumental in getting Texas onto the list of only 16 US States participating in the CALI Partnership.

Recently Samantha was a panelist at the Texas DeafBlind Symposium on the value of promoting engagement and inclusion of DeafBlind persons in all spheres of society. She serves on the Board of DeafBlind Camp of Texas, a nonprofit organization achieving this goal, and has performed in varied roles including Public Relations Officer, Support Services Coordinator, Events Coordinator and Programs Consultant.


Samantha specialized in working with language dysfluent deaf children in San Antonio area school districts for 10 years and instituted a Deaf Mentor Program in collaboration with United Way's Communities in Schools program at South San Antonio ISD.

# About Us

***"It is the job of Passion to thwart the obstacles of Practicality."***

**Samantha Ferrell**





# Typical Learning Challenges

for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students in US public schools

# Mainstream Education & Deafness

## Standardized Accommodations for a Linguistically Diverse Population

- Incidental Learning
  - Language Models
- Memory Encoding
  - Visual
  - Acoustic
  - Semantic
- Deaf Ed Teachers & Interpreters
  - ASL
  - PSE
  - SEE
  - Oral w/Signed Support
    - Morpheme conflicts
  - Language Dysfluent





ASL THAT! Youtube Channel: "SEE vs. PSE vs. ASL "I am going upstairs to my room." (<https://youtu.be/7ouO1gkZAil>)



*English is a linearly organized, spoken language received through the auditory process. ASL is a three-dimensional, spatially organized language received through the visual process.*

*ASL is a unique, authentic language apart from English, with its own grammar system, including rules for phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics entirely different from those of the English language.*





# No “Universal” Language

“...it includes us, relating to each other, soul to soul.”

-Micah Fields, Student, Gallaudet University

- **Black ASL** is the unique dialect of American Sign Language (ASL) that developed within historically segregated African American Deaf communities.
- Largely unknown to outsiders, **Black ASL** has become a symbol of solidarity and a vital part of identity within the Black Deaf community.
- Linguistically, BASL has marked differences from other varieties of ASL in its **Phonology, Syntax, and vocabulary**.

<http://blackaslproject.gallaudet.edu/BlackASLProject/Presentations.html>  
[www.talkingblackinamerica.org](http://www.talkingblackinamerica.org)





**Black ASL is the unique dialect of American Sign Language (ASL) that developed within historically segregated African American Deaf communities. Largely unknown to outsiders, Black ASL has become a symbol of solidarity and a vital part of identity within the Black Deaf community. This is an excerpt from the documentary, Signing Black in America, by the Language and Life Project.**

<https://www.talkingblackinamerica.org/>, <http://blackaslproject.gallaudet.edu/BlackASLProject/Presentations.html>





# Language Deprivation

The denial of *quality, natural* sign language exposure for Deaf children.

- **90% Deaf children born to hearing (nondeaf) families**
  - 88% of those families never learn to fluently communicate
- **Lack of consistent, fluent language models during the “critical period”**
  - First 5 Years -Language Acquisition & Pruning
  - Incidental Learning
  - Memory Encoding
  - Funds of Information
    - Dysfluency
    - FOI Deficits
    - Failure to Acquire
    - Mood & Behavior Disorders
    - Abnormal Thinking
    - Failure to Assimilate
    - Delays in Learning & Literacy



*“Interpreting involves moving from one language world to another, but how can one interpret for persons whose language skills are so poorly developed that, perhaps, they do not really have a fully created language world?”*

*“How does one provide [...] for persons unpracticed in the use of dialogue for self-expression and problem-solving?”*





# Long-Term Outcomes

**“Family Dog” by Deaf Artist Susan Dupor**

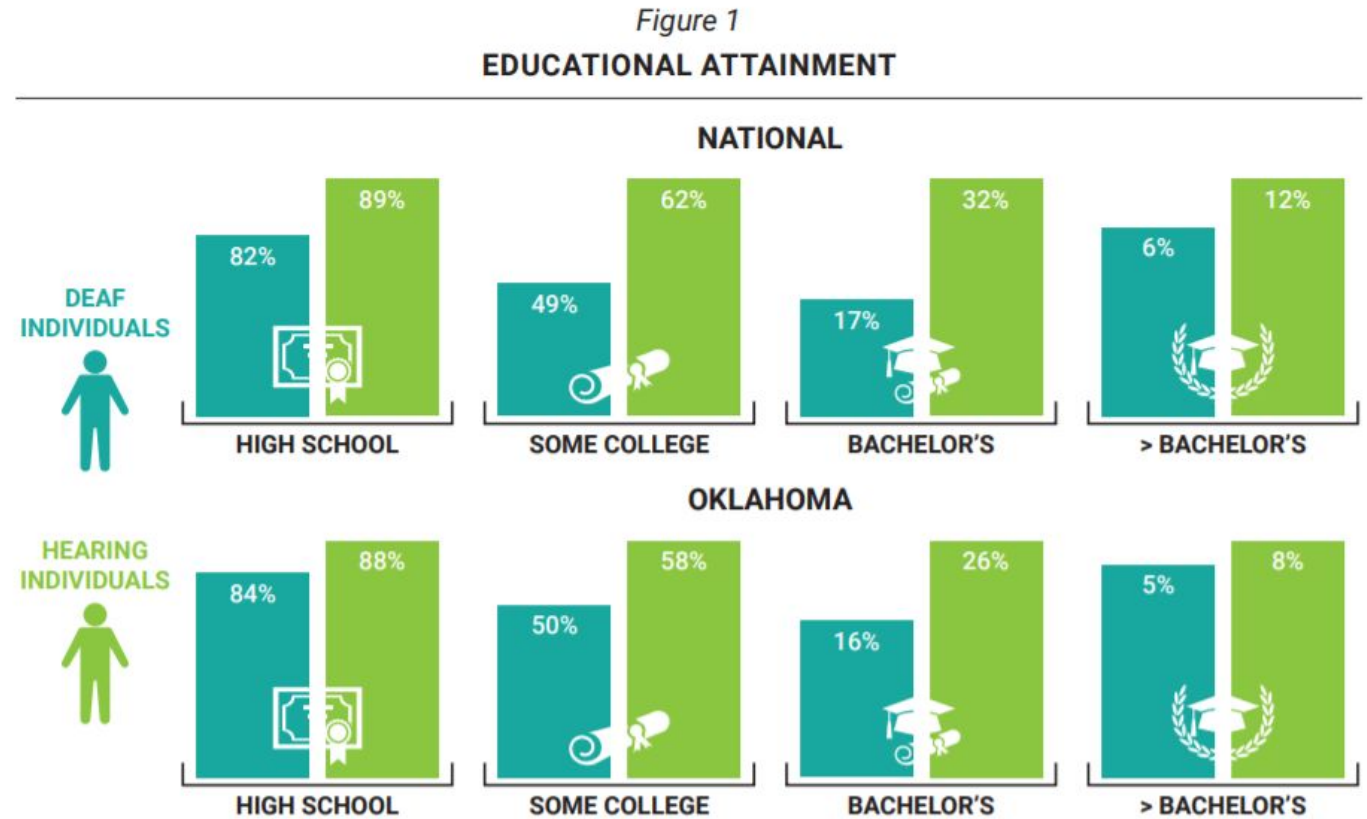
- **Significant impacts to an individual’s:**
  - Educational attainment
  - Employment attainment
  - Health literacy
  - Mental health
  - Social function/Citizenship
- **How does this impact the potential of Oklahoma’s DHH children to become healthy, independent, successful, contributing members of society?**



# Key Findings of Note:

## National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

- In general, Deaf people attain lower levels of education than hearing people.



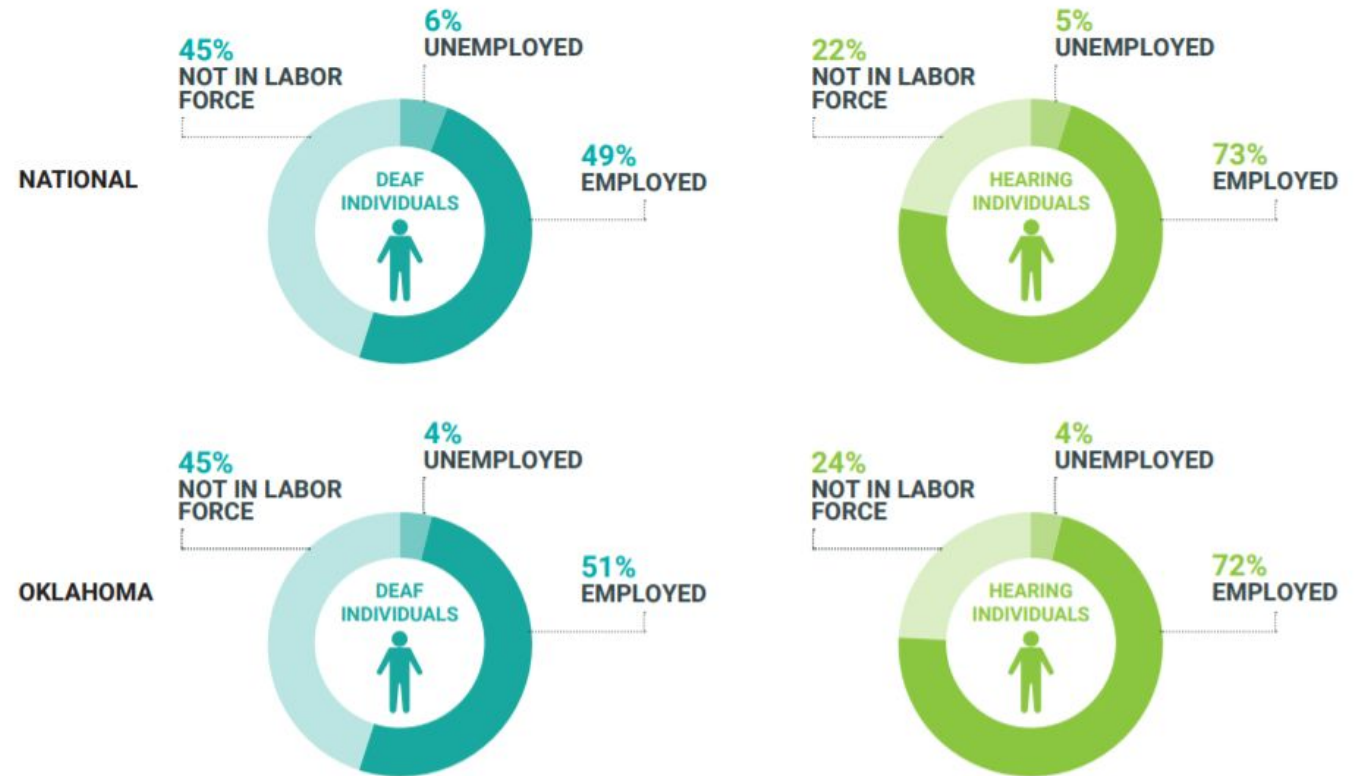
Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2017). Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Oklahoma: 2017. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. This report and featured images can be viewed in PDF form at: <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/sites/default/files/Oklahoma.pdf>

# Key Findings of Note:

## National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

- In general, Deaf people attain lower levels of education than hearing people.
- Lower levels of educational attainment widens the employment gap between Deaf and hearing individuals.

Figure 5  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN OKLAHOMA



Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2017). Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Oklahoma: 2017. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. This report and featured images can be viewed in PDF form at: <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/sites/default/files/Oklahoma.pdf>



# Key Findings of Note:

## National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

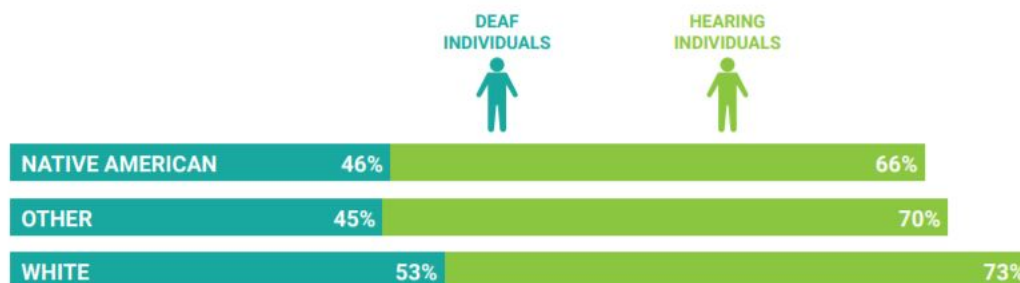
- In general, Deaf people attain lower levels of education than hearing people.
- Lower levels of educational attainment widens the employment gap between Deaf and hearing individuals.
- The complex intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender play a role in the educational experiences and outcomes of Deaf people.

Garberoglio, C. L., Cawthon, S., & Sales, A. (2017). Postsecondary Achievement of Deaf People in Oklahoma: 2017. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. This report and featured images can be viewed in PDF form at: <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/sites/default/files/Oklahoma.pdf>

Figure 6  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN OKLAHOMA BY GENDER



Figure 7  
EMPLOYMENT RATES IN OKLAHOMA BY RACE AND ETHNICITY





# Where does Oklahoma stand?

## How does one provide?

- Deaf children with dysfluent language cannot be accurately assessed for learning disabilities
  - Assessments commonly employed assume language fluency
  - There is no assessment for dyslexia appropriate for deaf, language dysfluent children
- What programs/supports are available?
- Who is involved?
  - Deaf Ed Teachers vs Educational Interpreters in OK
  - < 150 educational interpreters in the state
  - ONE Certified Deaf Interpreter
    - Does not work in education



*“Nobody raises a deaf child with the intention of depriving the child of language. [...] It extends into the realm of law, educational policy, and social practice.”*

*“Language deprivation as educational and public policy has persisted over the past three centuries.”*

*“This condition is caused by people and is therefore preventable...”*





So What Can Be Done?





# What Can Be Done?

Answering, “How does one provide?”

- Incidental Learning
  - Language Models
- Memory Encoding
  - Visual
  - Acoustic
  - Semantic
- Deaf Ed Teachers & Interpreters
  - ASL
  - PSE
  - SEE
  - Oral w/Signed Support
    - Morpheme conflicts
  - Language Dysfluent



# What Can Be Done?

Answering, “How does one provide?”

**Bishop Thomas Smith, Jr. Dream Academy can offer:**

- A Nationwide Variety of Fluent & Native Language Models
- Qualified Oversight
- Individualized Support
- Pre-Lessons & Lesson Supplements
- Language Options on a 3:1 (or better) Ratio
- Cross-Content Consistency to Improve Encoding





# What Can Be Done?

## Best practices in assessing learning

**Bishop Thomas Smith, Jr. Dream Academy can offer:**

### **Grades K-2 Language Acquisition**

- Early exposure to a variety of sign language models representative of the diverse American Deaf community (live or individualized)
- Summer book study (picture books, early readers)
- Pictures & Animation
- Online platform allows children/parents to access signed videos, supplemental & practice materials
  - Math, ELA, Science
  - Delivered in the language mode best fit to the child's individual needs



# What Can Be Done?

## Best practices in assessing learning

**Bishop Thomas Smith, Jr. Dream Academy can offer:**

### **Grades 3-5 Dialogue**

- Model a classroom w/Deaf children
- Summer book study
- Pictures & Animation
- Online platform allows children/parents to access signed videos, supplemental & practice materials
  - Math, ELA, Science
  - Customized to course content
  - Delivered in the language mode best fit to the child's individual needs





# What Can Be Done?

## Best practices in assessing learning

**Bishop Thomas Smith, Jr. Dream Academy can offer:**

### **Grades 6-8 Dialogue**

- Model a classroom w/Deaf children
- Summer book study
  - Additional projects
- Pictures & Animation
- Online platform allows children/parents to access signed videos, supplemental & practice materials
  - Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies
  - Customized to course content
  - Delivered in the language mode best fit to the individual child's needs



# What Can Be Done?

## Best practices in assessing learning

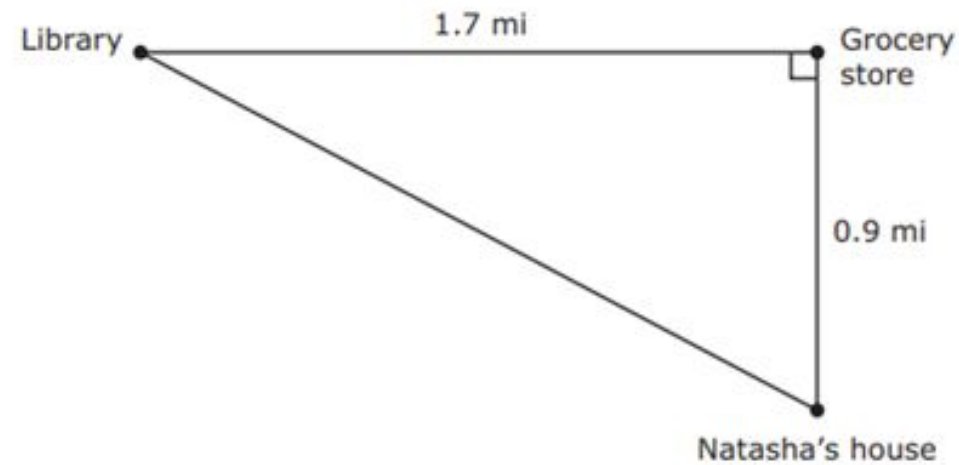
**Bishop Thomas Smith, Jr. Dream Academy can offer:**

### **Grades 9-12 Dialogue**

- Model a classroom w/Deaf children
  - Exposure to a variety of language models representative of the diverse American Deaf community
- Summer book study
  - Additional projects
- Pictures & Animation
- Online platform allows teens/parents to access signed videos, supplemental & practice materials
  - Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies
  - Customized to course content
  - Delivered in the language mode best fit to the individual's needs



- 5 Natasha walked from the library to the grocery store and then to her house. The diagram shows the top view of the locations of these three places and their distances from each other.



Which measurement is closest to the shortest distance in miles from Natasha's house to the library?

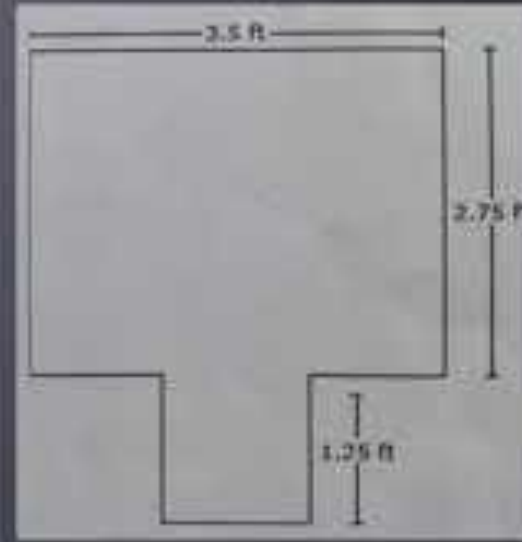
- A 2.6 mi
- B 1.9 mi
- C 1.4 mi
- D 2.3 mi





Sample Video 1: PSE





Sample Video 2: ASL



Sample Video 3: ASL





Sample Video 4: SEE