ASL VA
ASL VIRTUAL ACADEMY

How to Offer American Sign Language Classes To Your High School Students:

A school administrator's guide to overcoming the obstacles of offering a high quality ASL class for an outstanding student experience.

"Online learning is not the next big thing, it is the now big thing."

- Donna J. Abernathy
Editor of Training & Development Magazine

ASL Virtual Academy

www.aslvirtualacademy.com

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01 | WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

American Sign Language. How many times has your life intersected with this language? Perhaps as a child your first experience was seeing an interpreter at church, at a commencement speech, or a couple signing to their deaf child. This unique, visual-gestural language no doubt captures a person's interest.

"How cool!"   **"I wonder what they're saying."**   **"I wish I knew how to talk with my hands."**

These are the typical reactions people have to seeing ASL. In fact, the popularity and use of ASL has grown so much over the years, it's hard to miss. Deaf culture has infiltrated pop culture in a variety of ways: movies, shows, commercials, press conferences, etc. It's everywhere, bringing even more awareness to the language and culture, like never before.

My first exposure to ASL literally came knocking on my door when I was 11. Susan was Deaf, my same age, and lived a few doors down the street. I was fascinated with the way Susan used ASL to communicate. We became fast friends and before long, I was conversational in ASL. I didn't know it at the time, but ASL would end up being a long and rewarding career path as an ASL interpreter and teacher.

I have a true passion for ASL and Deaf culture, and everyday feel fortunate that I have the opportunity to spread my passion and knowledge to high school students. Over the years I have witnessed the increased interest by students, and limited supply of highly qualified ASL instructors. In 2016 I decided to leverage technology advancements to provide high quality ASL classes to students around the country. I am the curriculum developer and co-founder of ASL Virtual Academy. I want students to feel confident having a conversation in ASL with a Deaf person, and bring my enthusiasm for the language and teaching to my classroom. I strive to ignite a passion for learning in my students, by introducing them to a new language and new culture.

THIS GUIDE IS FOR:
Principals, Guidance Counselors, Foreign Language Directors, and Curriculum Directors

- The Director of Foreign Language seeing ASL as a great way to expand an existing foreign language program.

- The Director of Curriculum who has fielded numerous phone calls from parents expressing interest in ASL for their children.

- A guidance counselor who has a dyslexic student seeking ASL in place of a traditional spoken language, or the transferring student needing their second or third year of ASL to complete the sequence.

- The high school principal facing challenges with trying to replace an ASL teacher due to retirement, transfer, leave, or other reasons.

If you find yourself in any of these scenarios, this guide is for you!

I was lucky to have ASL offered as a foreign language when I was a high school student; something fairly rare 20+ years ago.

This guide is designed to help school administrators who would like to offer the same opportunities to their students.

- Emily Fermier,
ASL Virtual Academy
Program Director

02 | What is ASL Virtual Academy?

The ASL Virtual Academy is the leader in online American Sign Language education. Our innovative classes teach students how to communicate in ASL and about American Deaf culture. We use a comprehensive curriculum that is aligned with the National Standards for Learning Languages. The five C's for learning languages are used as a roadmap to guide students' learning.

Students learn through engaging pre-recorded video lessons. We've designed fun and interactive activities to help students practice what they're learning, with plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their skills! We use a variety of assessment tools to help measure students' abilities and growth throughout the course, and provide a detailed grade report upon successful completion of the class. Students enrolled are typically taking ASL for credit for high school graduation and/or college admission.
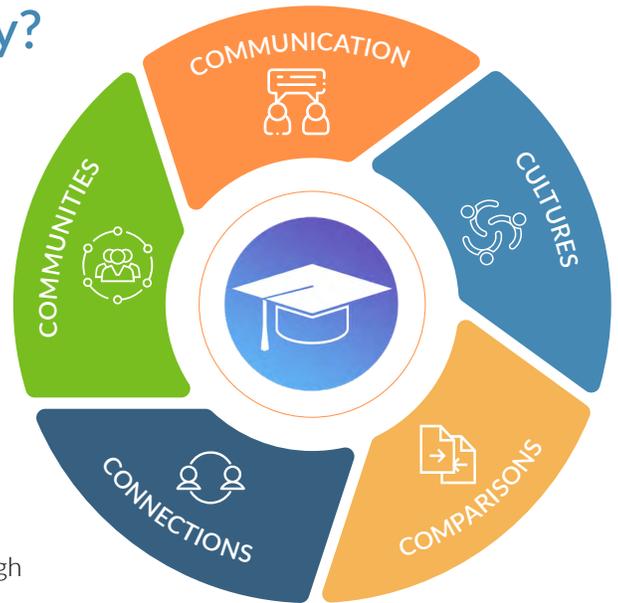
03 | Why is there rising interest in ASL?

It goes without saying that any high school of any size is going to have at least one student interested in taking ASL. In fact, you might be surprised to find out that given the choice of a traditional spoken language course offering, or ASL, how many students choose ASL.

We've seen schools send out student surveys gauging interest in ASL with some eyebrow-raising results.

There's no doubt you will have student interest in ASL at least on some level, but is there an obligation to offer the class? Should you join the other schools already offering ASL?

Schools are turning to ASL to strengthen their mission of providing educational excellence to all, and nurturing the individualized instruction needs of each student.

Let's take a closer look at:

The use of ASL

The study and growth of ASL

Student demand for ASL

What we'll notice is it's obvious ASL is rising in popularity and can enhance the student experience.

The use of ASL

What many people don't realize is that ASL is a true bonafide language with its own vocabulary and grammar that differs from English. ASL shares the same linguistic properties as other spoken languages. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), it's estimated that between 500,000 and 2,000,000 people in the United States use ASL as their first language.

The study and growth of ASL

ASL is not only widely used, it's widely studied. ASL is the 3rd most popular language in US institutions of higher education measured by student enrollments, behind only Spanish (1) and French (2).

ASL has seen the biggest percentage growth in student enrollments in US based institutions of higher education compared to Spanish, French, and German since 1990.

1990 ENROLLMENTS

SPANISH	GERMAN
534,143	133,594
FRENCH	**ASL**
273,116	1602

2016 ENROLLMENTS

SPANISH	GERMAN
712,240	80,594
FRENCH	**ASL**
175,667	107,060

1990 TO 2016 % CHANGE

ASL
6583%
INCREASE
(approximately 66x 1990)

SPANISH
33.3%
INCREASE

FRENCH
35.7%
DECREASE
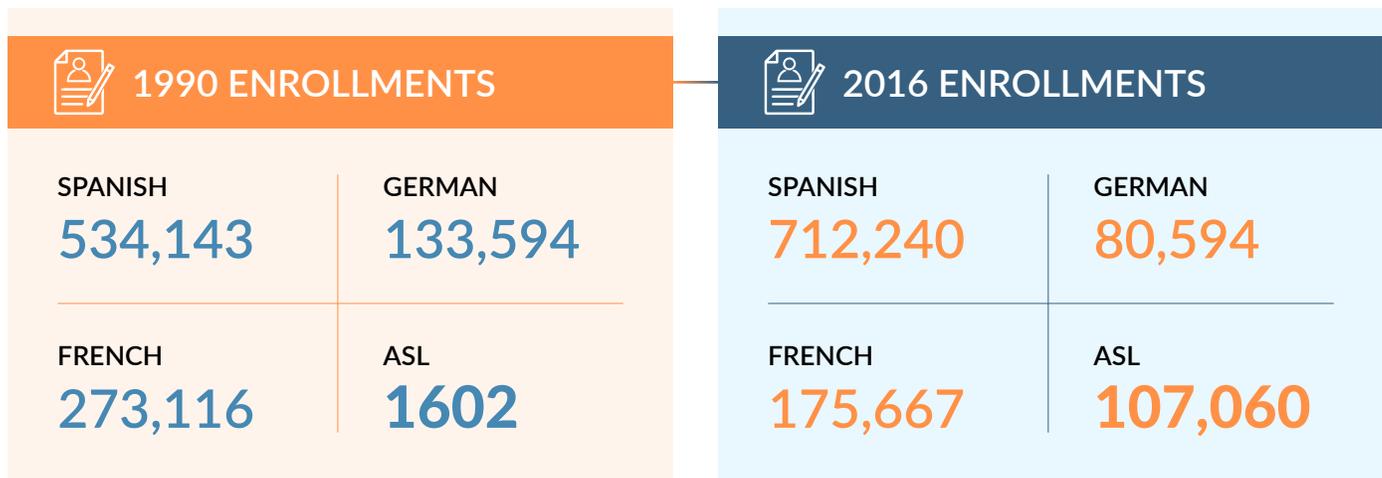
GERMAN
39.7%
DECREASE
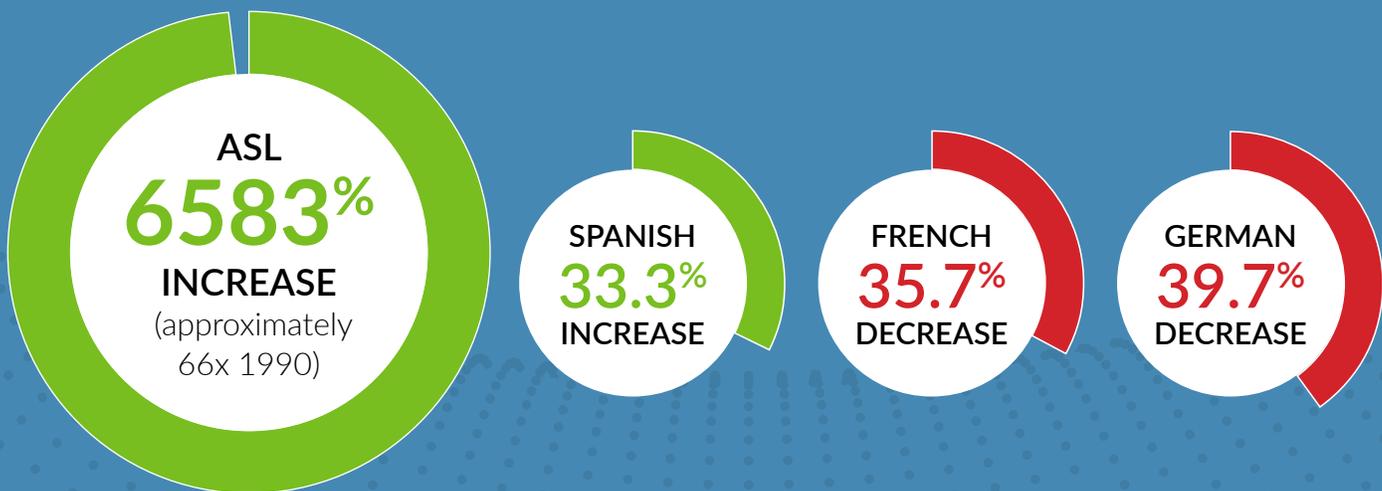
"Statistics from Modern Language Association"

Student demand for ASL

Students are taking ASL because they know it can be highly useful in the present day, and for their future careers. Careers that directly or indirectly use ASL include: special education, speech pathology, audiology, social work, teaching, interpreting, medicine, law and more. Even more exciting is that students can start using ASL immediately. Students with jobs at grocery stores, nursing homes, babysitting, restaurants, to name a few, provide plenty of opportunity to use ASL. In addition, students may have a relative, neighbor, or classmate who is Deaf where ASL can strengthen a relationship.

Students with dyslexia, other learning disabilities, and/or visual and kinesthetic learners, are also showing an increase in demand for ASL classes. They realize ASL can greatly compliment their learning style when pursing foreign language credit. ASL provides an equal opportunity for these students, but more on that in the next chapter.

So the question still stands, why is there such a dramatic rise of interest in ASL?

WHEN YOU CONSIDER...

Equal opportunity for ALL students	*Diversification of course offerings*	*Expanding career opportunities*	*Wide application of ASL*	*Overall better student outcomes*

...hundreds of school administrators across the country are adding ASL to their curriculums contributing to its rising popularity. And it's not just high schools. Community colleges and universities (including Ivy League) are adding ASL to their curriculum at a fast rate.

They've decided it goes beyond mission statement and purpose to offer ASL. For them, it's their obligation and duty to provide this opportunity for their students. And the best news of all...while there are challenges in building an ASL program, they can be overcome.

04 | ASL and dyslexia

Choosing ASL as a foreign language for application towards a future career is a wise choice for many students, but what if ASL wasn't so much a wise choice, but instead a strong need just to fulfill high school graduation or college entrance requirements? This is the reality for a segment of the student population with dyslexia.

It's widely accepted that approximately 15% of the population has dyslexia. Dyslexia is relatively common, with dyslexics enrolled in nearly every high school in the country. A school that is truly committed to these students will provide foreign language accommodations in one form or another. ASL is not just an accommodation to dyslexic students, it's an opportunity!

Many people with dyslexia have challenges with the sounds (phonemes) of a language, as well as the written form. If these students have challenges mastering their primary language, it goes without saying they're at a significant disadvantage to learning a second language.

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid"

- Albert Einstein
Physicist, and dyslexic

Did you know...

The English language contains 44 unique sounds, German 46, and French 34. How many unique sounds or phonemes does American Sign Language have? You guessed it! Zero.

Level the playing field...

The difference for dyslexic students taking ASL instead of traditional spoken language is simple. They now have the best opportunity to succeed with a level playing field when they bring their best effort to the class. The same can't be said for the dyslexic student enrolled in a traditional spoken language. So often these classes lead to extreme frustration for both student and teacher, and poor outcomes. Poor experience and poor outcome can carryover to other coursework when you consider the extra time it takes to perhaps get by with a "C" (or worse) in their foreign language.

Academically rewarding...

Don't confuse the fact that because ASL has no sounds or written form that it's "easy." ASL still provides an academically rigorous experience for students where they will need to apply effort and dedication.

Student's full potential...

As you well know, many high schools across the U.S. require two years of foreign language credit to graduate high school. Further, a similar entrance requirement is in place for most colleges and universities. In extreme cases, failure in foreign language is the tipping point that prevents a student from advancing into post-secondary education. Dismissing ASL as an unnecessary class can easily lead to a student being deprived of their full potential to excel in the classroom and beyond.

CONCLUSION | **A quality ASL class can allow the student to achieve success in their foreign language class.**

05 | Solving the challenges of building an ASL program

Let's face it, starting anything new at your school can have its challenges, and starting an ASL program is no different.

Where will you find an ASL teacher?

Can you justify hiring a teacher if you're a small school with a handful of students interested?

Where is there room in the budget to absorb the new cost?

> *"While they were saying it couldn't be done, it was done."*
>
> *- Helen Keller*
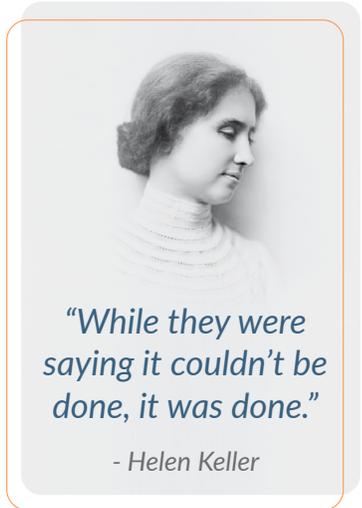
The very famous deaf-blind activist Helen Keller stated it well in the above quote. Too many schools get caught up in the challenges of building an ASL program thinking they'll never have one, while others work through it and create massive opportunity for their students. How will you lead your school?

ASL teacher shortage and hiring pitfalls

There is a significant shortage of **qualified** ASL teachers. Ask any principal that tried recruiting an ASL teacher, and you'll probably hear something like,

 "There's just no one out there qualified or interested in teaching ASL at our school."

This low supply of ASL teachers can often mislead administrators into relaxing the qualifications in order to fill the role. Placing a staff member who took a couple college ASL classes into the role of teaching ASL will not yield a quality class. Even an ASL interpreter who is fluent in the language may not have the proper teaching experience to best serve students. The same holds true for a Deaf person schools sometimes hire to fill the position. A Deaf person fluent in ASL, but lacking training in teaching ASL as a foreign language, isn't necessarily qualified to teach ASL the same way someone fluent in English isn't necessarily qualified to teach an English class.
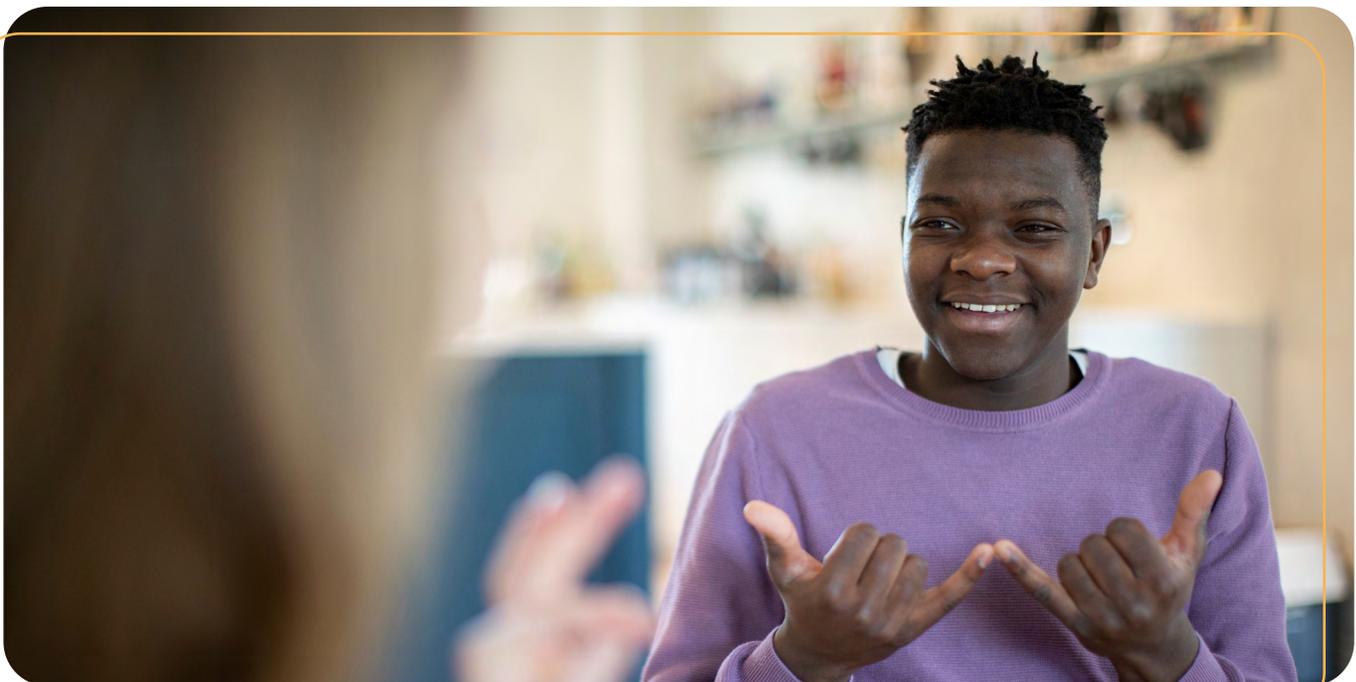
The bottom line is, unless you have the combination of fluency in ASL and teaching experience, the class quality and student experience will suffer.

Our Curriculum Designer *learned ASL as a second language*, and has her Masters degree in teaching *ASL as a second language.*

Make no mistake, a Deaf person trained in teaching ASL is an outstanding choice to create a strong student experience while bringing Deaf culture into the classroom. However, these teachers are tough to find. They bring an experience to the classroom no one else can. We recognize the immeasurable value of having students interact with Deaf native signers, and we bring that experience to our virtual classroom. Truly the best of both worlds.

Reference the statistics earlier in this guide about the growth and student interest in ASL. The supply of qualified ASL teachers is simply not keeping up with the student demand. If your school is located in a major metropolitan area, or near a university with a reputable ASL program, you may have more luck in recruiting a teacher. But if you're not located in those areas, it becomes increasingly difficult to source, recruit, and hire.

One of the ideas behind ASL Virtual Academy was to leverage the widespread rising speeds/bandwidth of the internet to bring ASL to students across the country. Today, learning ASL online is possible because of these technology advancements, whereas even 10 years ago it would have been much more difficult.

We take highly qualified ASL teachers and deliver their expertise, and our online curriculum to students everywhere. Finding an ASL teacher for your school, in your part of the country, is no longer an obstacle to offering this class. You can now tap into qualified ASL teachers via ASL Virtual Academy.

Can you justify the cost of an ASL teacher?

> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the average high school teacher in the US makes approximately **$65,000** a year. That does not include additional benefits like PTO, health benefits, retirement contributions, etc. Obviously, this figure varies depending upon what part of the country you're in. Teachers in New York earn the most (nearly **$90,000**) and teachers in Oklahoma earn the least (nearly **$40,000**) on average. Public vs. private school wages will vary as well.
>
> Assuming your school can find a qualified ASL teacher (and that might be a big assumption), how can you justify paying these wages if you have 5, 10, or 20 ASL students? The answer is you can't. It simply doesn't make sense.

For a passing moment you might think hiring a part-time teacher is the answer, but that too has flaws. Remember the supply/demand imbalance for ASL teachers. It's difficult enough to recruit a full-time teacher on full time wages, it's exponentially more difficult to entice these teachers for part-time wages. They know their value and the demand for their skillset. Most are trying to maximize their earning potential.

ASL Virtual Academy is designed to accommodate 1 student or 100+ students at any given school. Justifying a full-time ASL teacher salary for a modest class size of students is no longer an obstacle.

Finding room in the budget

There are a variety of ways to make ASL affordable and within budget. While some schools decide to pay the entirety of each student's tuition to ASL Virtual Academy, other schools decide to split the cost with the student/family. This arrangement can work really well providing a "win-win" where the schools saves on their budget, while the student/family has additional "buy in" to the class providing more student engagement.

In other cases, the school doesn't have room in the budget, and has the student/family pay the full tuition. The school provides the opportunity in the form of credit approval instead of covering tuition costs. The school opening the door by approving the class for credit is an enormous value to the student. For many student families, this credit approval is worth more than a school paid class.

Finally, private schools have been known to leverage title monies to pay for their ASL program, in part or in whole.

06 | How students learn with us

We're always excited to show off our virtual classroom! This is where the rubber meets the road because our classroom, and the student experience it offers, is what's most important. The foundation of our classroom is our learning management system (LMS), Schoology. Schoology serves thousands of schools around the globe, and perhaps your school is one of them.

Schoology is where all course materials are located. Students are provided a unique username and password to access the materials. Once logged in, students will follow a checklist that guides them step by step through the entire class. Every lesson, assignment, quiz, test, practice conversation, etc. is mapped out in the order in which they need to complete them. Students simply move down the list and check off items as they go.

We have created an effective combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities, designed for optimal mastery of the material.

Peak inside our classroom

A further breakdown of how the class is organized and how students will learn:

- Watch thematic pre-recorded lessons, which lends itself to self-paced study and mastery.
- Complete online review activities, assignments, quizzes and tests.
- Record signing practice activities and signing assignments, for which they receive detailed feedback from their teacher, and their classmates.
- View their classmates' signing submissions, and provide constructive feedback to their classmates.
- Have approximately 65 opportunities to receive feedback on their signing skills and 65 opportunities to view their classmates' submissions with instructor feedback.
- View authentic resources produced by native signers such as ASL music videos, Deaf art, Deaf jokes, ASL Storytelling, news headliners delivered in ASL, etc.
- Read and analyze articles related to Deaf culture.
- Participate in 1:1 and small group live conversation practice sessions with their instructor and/or classmates.
- Send and receive weekly video messages to classmates and their instructor, for additional practice.
- Participate in instructor led, live, unit review sessions.
- Participate in 1:1 live practice conversations with a Deaf native signer.
- Have opportunities to attend office hours via video conferencing.

To summarize, we provide a perfect blend of asynchronous and synchronous learning formats to maximize student engagement, outcomes, and course quality.

Sometimes it is better to show than to tell, especially when trying to describe our classroom. For an 11 minute "peak into our classroom" video use this YouTube link: *https://youtu.be/PoJ0g4d8ia4*

If that's not enough, we invite you to see for yourself. Just email or call us, and we're happy to provide guest access to our LMS.

07 | What students learn with us

Considerable time and resources were invested in the creation of our ASL program. We currently offer ASL 1, ASL 2, and ASL 3, totaling 3 consecutive years of foreign language. Each level of ASL contains six units of content, and is designed to be commensurate with the amount of content presented in one academic school year.

In other words, ASL 1 is equivalent to one Carnegie Unit, or one academic year's worth of curriculum. The same is true for ASL 2 and ASL 3.

On the content overview chart (seen below), you'll notice three columns including: topic, grammar, and culture. Our program goes well beyond the memorization of vocabulary and is a comprehensive approach to teaching the language. Students are expected to comprehend and produce the language, in addition to understanding Deaf culture.

We offer an original curriculum developed by a highly experienced ASL teacher who has been involved in the Deaf community for over 20 years and has been teaching ASL since 2003. It's original, but it does have heavy influence from the two most popular ASL curriculums, "Master ASL" and "Signing Naturally." Our curriculum aligns with the National Standards of Language Learning. All course materials are located online, as such, no textbook is required to take this class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Communicate in American Sign Language (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes)

Gain knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture

Use ASL to connect with other disciplines and expand knowledge

Develop insight into the nature of language and culture through comparisons of ASL and Deaf culture, and their own language culture

Become lifelong learners by using ASL for personal enjoyment and enrichment

Overview of our curriculum

ASL 1 content overview

For a content overview of ASL 2 and ASL 3 please contact us

	TOPICS	GRAMMAR	CULTURE
UNIT 1	Introductions Feelings/ Emotions Essential Signs Alphabet Language/Culture	NMGS Sentence Types: *Wh-questions *Y/N-questions Fingerspelling Pronouns	Language Culture ASL Deaf Culture Deaf Community
UNIT 2	School Colors Numbers 0-10 Essential Signs Courtesy	Sentence Types: *WH-questions expanded * Y/N-questions (wiggle marker) Closing Signals Parameters Agent Marker Number Systems: Cardinal Numbers	Getting a deaf person's attention Negotiating a signing environment Maintaining eye contact
UNIT 3	People Conversational Feedback Numbers 11-30 Essential Signs	Referencing Number Systems: Cardinal Numbers Sentence Types: * Declarative * Affirmative * Negative	Family Dynamics Causes of Deafness CODAs
UNIT 4	Interests Locations Feelings + Opinions Numbers 31-60	Contrastive Structure Listing + Ordering Sentence Types: * Topic Comment Sign Iconicity	Perspectives on deafness Deaf Gain
UNIT 5	Calendar Ordinal Numbers	Tense General to Specific Syntax Rule of 9 Multi morphemic Signs Number Systems: Ordinal Numbers	History of ASL - Home Signs - Gallaudet - Clerc - Martha's Vineyard
UNIT 6	Classifiers CL Handshapes CL Referents Numbers 61-100	Classifiers - Handshapes - Usage of CLs	Technology Utilized by deaf people - TTY - Videophone - CART - Alerting Devices - Hearing Aids - Cochlear Implants - Hearing Dogs

08 | How our class is structured

While we pride ourselves on providing a "turnkey" program for schools to implement, it is important to understand our class structure. One of the benefits of ASL Virtual Academy is a certain level of flexibility offered with class structure.

IN THIS SECTION WE WILL DISCUSS:

Developing a class roster	Curriculum delivery model	The role of the Learning Coach and Learning Facilitator

Developing a class roster

The first consideration is estimated number of students taking ASL. The design of the class is going to vary slightly depending on if there's 1 student enrolled or 100. There's three general ways schools gauge student interest and develop a class roster for ASL.

Email a survey to students and parents (for schools unaware of student interest)

Present ASL as a formal class offering for students' selection (for schools mostly aware of student interest)

Head count already estimated (for schools very aware of student interest)

Many schools like ASL to be a formal class offering to all students, and thus treat it similarly to other classes at the school. ASL as a formal class offering generally results in high student interest. Depending on the size of your school, high student interest could mean anything from 15 to 100+ students.

Once there's a solid estimate of head count on the class roster, it's important to understand our curriculum delivery model.

Curriculum delivery model

The design of this course is:

Online	Student paced	Individual or cohort
Blended synchronous and asynchronous learning		Competency based progression

Much time and consideration was invested in the curriculum delivery model. The design provides opportunity for individualized education and strong student outcomes. **It further provides schools the flexibility to have as many or as few students enrolled in the course as they wish.**

Student paced:

Students are allowed to progress through course materials at their own pace, helping them achieve mastery of the topic before moving on. This individualized learning path allows students to move forward with their learning at a pace that is appropriate for them.

Students who are grasping the concepts quickly are not slowed down by students who may need additional time developing their skills.

Other students may benefit from re-watching lessons, and taking more time to practice before moving on. They benefit from not being rushed on to the next concept before they're ready just because their peer is ready to move on.

This pacing structure allows for more individualized learning, benefiting both types of students. This is usually not possible when students are taking a class together synchronously in a physical classroom with one teacher.

Our student paced structure maintains progress expectations. Students are provided a very clear pacing schedule showing where they should be in the curriculum at all points throughout the school year, reducing opportunities for procrastination. We are in regular contact with students (parents and administrators) about the importance of consistent participation in the class, and how their progress compares to a standard nine month completion timeline. Additionally, we send biweekly progress reports showing both overall grade, and metrics on participation, helping ensure no one gets left behind (see student accountability, assessments, and progress reports for more information).

Individual or Cohort Class:

Schools need to determine if the class will be offered to one student, a small cohort, or a large cohort (see roster creation). There is flexibility to offer any option. This class can provide excellent student experiences and outcomes whether taken individually or as a cohort. Often, schools want to offer a formal class to a cohort of 15 or more.

The benefits of students taking the class together, in the same physical space are rather straight forward. There are opportunities for collaboration, practicing the language with each other, and an overall feeling of community among the students. The student paced structure within a cohort often leads to the creation of class leaders who serve as mentors/study partners to others not mastering the material as fast. They can be a great peer resource and help other students.

Individual participation provides the opportunity for students to learn how to work independently. Working independently is a skill in and of itself, preparing students for post-secondary coursework where this is crucial. While a student may be the only one from his/her school taking the class, they have many virtual classmates they are learning along side and interacting with. The student will never feel like he/she is learning alone, on an island. He/she will be receiving and providing feedback on signing assignments, asking and answering questions, participating in review sessions with peers, and have opportunities to practice 1:1 or in small groups with other ASL classmates.

The bottom line is, the class is available and beneficial to just 1 or 100+ students.

Blended synchronous and asynchronous learning:

Our progressive delivery model takes the benefits of both asynchronous and synchronous learning to provide the best student experience.

Asynchronous components of our program delivered through our LMS include:

The majority of our curriculum is delivered asynchronously. Students have access to the curriculum at all times. All lessons, activities, assessments, quizzes, tests, etc. are at the students fingertips when they're ready. This unlimited access provides opportunities to re-watch lessons if needed, and master the material before moving on. It also provides a safety net to students who may have fallen behind and need time outside of their designated class period to catch up. It can be a scheduling hassle to have all ASL students in the same classroom at the same time to watch a scheduled lesson. The asynchronous format alleviates that challenge while providing these additional benefits.

Synchronous interaction is still an important component of our program and we offer this to enhance the asynchronous portion. Synchronous activities are scheduled around the student's availability when possible.

Synchronous components of our program conducted via video conference include:

Conversation Practice Sessions: these are opportunities for students to interact with a Deaf native signer. This exposure to a Deaf native signer is an excellent experience for students and not found in many ASL classes. It's graded on effort and participation and designed to be a relaxed conversation. It builds the confidence for students to have future conversations with Deaf people in their daily lives.

ASL Hangouts: these are led by one of our ASL teachers through Zoom. They are a fun opportunity for students to interact with other ASL classmates, play review games, and learn new signs.

Unit Review Sessions: periodic scheduled video conferences hosted by one of our teachers with a more structured format, reviewing specific units of the course, helping to prepare for end of unit tests.

Student to student practice conversations: these are voluntary practice conversations students can either participate in live with their peers, or virtually with other ASL students enrolled in the same class.

Meet and Greet: at the start of the year all students have an opportunity to meet live with their teacher (we call them Learning Facilitators) to get to know each other, review course layout, expectations, etc. Periodically, Learning Facilitators will conduct progress meetings with students.

Student questions: At any time throughout the course, students have the ability to reach out to their Learning Facilitator to get answers to their questions. Questions are not answered instantly, but are generally answered within 24 hours.

Competency Based Progression:

As we've discussed, this class is student-paced allowing students to progress through the material at a rate that best suits their needs. The factors effecting one student's pace from another include: retention of material, natural skill, motivation/interest, aptitude for online learning, learning disabilities, and competency.

In order to build a strong foundation of language learning, students need to successfully complete each unit in order. When you boil it all down, the single thing that will allow students to progress through the class is competency. Competency is demonstrated by two factors: overall grade, and completion. Completion is calculated against various course measures.

Course measures are: semesters, quarters, units, lessons, etc

Simply put, students can't move from quarter 1 to quarter 2 if they're not demonstrating competency in quarter 1. Students can't move from Unit 1 to Unit 2 until they first demonstrate competency in Unit 1.

Competence is defined as an overall grade of no less than 70%, and no less than 90% completion of a particular course measure.

Benefits of Competency Based Progression

Students that fall behind don't have increasing odds of staying behind as time continues. Students who fail the first quarter of geometry have an extremely difficult time passing second quarter in a synchronous class. The class has moved on to more complex concepts built upon Q1's understanding of less complex concepts. You can't catch up without significant intervention from teachers, tutors, parents, and massive effort from the student. In our program, if the majority of students are on Unit 4, the student on Unit 2 still has opportunity to demonstrate competence (albeit at a slower rate), instead of failing in Unit 4.

Student engagement remains high in this progression model. You don't have slower students discouraged and overwhelmed with the fast pace. You also don't have the faster students bored and frustrated at the slow pace. It's learning that's personalized to each specific student.

Learning Coaches and Learning Facilitators

To increase positive student outcomes we've developed two critically important roles that actively interact with students to encourage them, motivate them, and help hold them accountable. These roles are the Learning Coach and the Learning Facilitator.

Learning Coach: A Learning Coach is a designated adult (this can be a school staff member, or parent/guardian) who is in direct contact with the student(s) to support their progress throughout the course and make sure the student(s) are engaged in the curriculum. They assist with time management, accountability, motivation, and ensure the student(s) are on track with completing course material in a timely manner. **They do NOT need any knowledge of ASL.** Having a Learning Coach is mandatory to help ensure the best student outcomes. If the school is unable to staff a Learning Coach, parent/guardians can fulfill this role.

Learning Facilitator: The ASL teacher employed by ASL Virtual Academy as the teacher responsible for guiding the students through the curriculum. They answer questions, administer grades, provide constructive feedback and encouragement to the students to ensure positive student outcomes. The Learning Facilitator is in regular contact with both students and the Learning Coach.
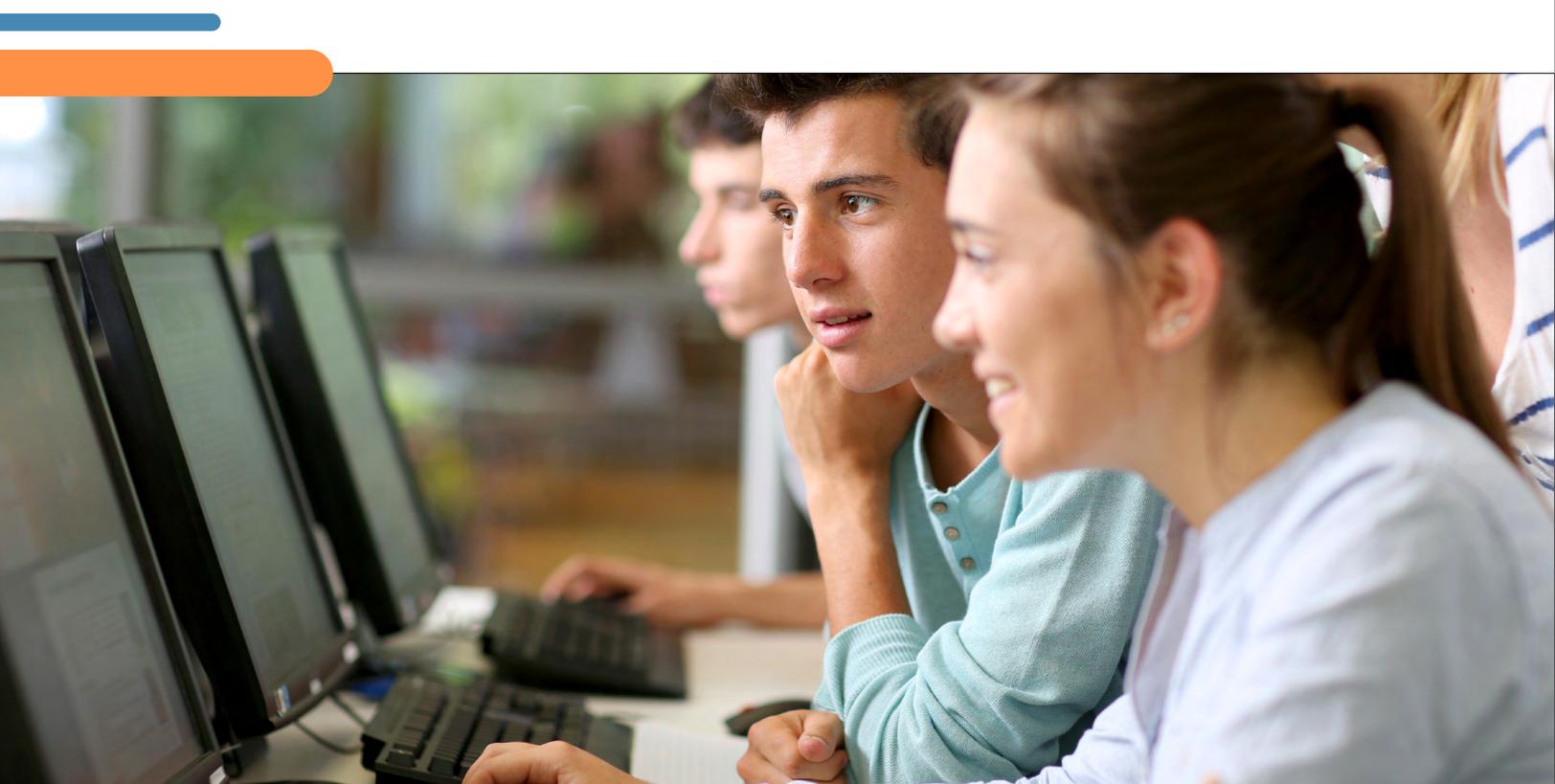
09 | Student accountability, assessments, and progress reports

We strive to overcome some of the traditional challenges associated with online learning. Self-directed online learning can be a double-edged sword. The autonomy and individualized pacing can backfire when students are not held accountable.

We make it difficult for students to fall behind and get off track with regular progress reporting. Our progress reports include two primary metrics on student performance: grade and completion. Every report includes these two very important pieces of information to provide the complete picture of student performance.

On page 21 is a sample of an individual progress report. This report is sent to the student, parent, and Learning Coach.

On page 22 is a sample of a class progress report for the Learning Coach. This report is more consolidated in nature and provides an overview of all students in one report.

ASL Class Progress Report (Bi-Weekly)

Date of report: 1/15/2021
Prepared for: Arlington High School
Prepared by: ASL Virtual Academy

Start date of class: 8/30/2020
Goal completion date of class: 5/25/2021

Name	Grade	Student Completion	9 month completion	Pacing	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Michael Jordan	99%	55%	57%	on pace	99%	97%	-	-
Tiger Woods	94%	59%	57%	on pace	91%	97%	-	-
Bruce Springstein	82%	57%	57%	on pace	79%	85%	-	-
Shaquelle O'Neil	78%	65%	57%	ahead	75%	81%	-	-
Kevin Barnett	91%	44%	57%	behind	88%	94%	-	-
Barry Bonds	89%	49%	57%	behind	86%	92%	-	-
Lenny Kravitz	84%	53%	57%	on pace	81%	87%	-	-
Matthew Stewart	90%	57%	57%	on pace	87%	93%	-	-
Ashley Billingsley	81%	61%	57%	on pace	78%	84%	-	-
Steven Tyler	93%	41%	57%	behind	90%	96%	-	-
Jose Conseco	94%	32%	57%	well behind	91%	97%	-	-
Brad Pitt	71%	55%	57%	on pace	68%	74%	-	-
Kailey Burns	88%	59%	57%	on pace	85%	91%	-	-
Kevin Smith	79%	50%	57%	on pace	76%	82%	-	-
Bobby Bonilla	91%	51%	57%	on pace	88%	94%	-	-
Aaron Cherry	87%	55%	57%	on pace	84%	90%	-	-
Olga Chubbuck	58%	29%	57%	well behind	55%	61%	-	-
Taylor Cohen	90%	71%	57%	ahead	87%	93%	-	-
Faith Donald	80%	49%	57%	behind	77%	83%	-	-
Kevin Hart	74%	55%	57%	on pace	71%	77%	-	-
Ashton Kutcher	49%	2%	57%	well behind	46%	52%	-	-
Miley Cirus	88%	57%	57%	on pace	85%	91%	-	-
Tristania Crichlow	83%	54%	57%	on pace	80%	86%	-	-
Frank Sinatra	92%	59%	57%	on pace	89%	95%	-	-
Frank Thomas	96%	55%	57%	on pace	93%	99%	-	-
Jon Denny	86%	49%	57%	behind	83%	89%	-	-
Ted Coss	93%	61%	57%	on pace	90%	96%	-	-
Steve Enochs	92%	74%	57%	ahead	89%	95%	-	-
Ben Dormire	77%	60%	57%	on pace	74%	80%	-	-

Overall grade & class completion / **Quarterly Grades**

*Student completion-represents the students' % completion of all required assessments

**9 month completion- represents where the student SHOULD currently be to complete class in 9 months

ASL 1 Progress Report
Prepared by ASL Virtual Academy

Student Name: John Smith
Date of Report: Jan 15, 2021
Student start: Aug 17, 2020
Goal Completion: April 27, 2021
Days in class: 151
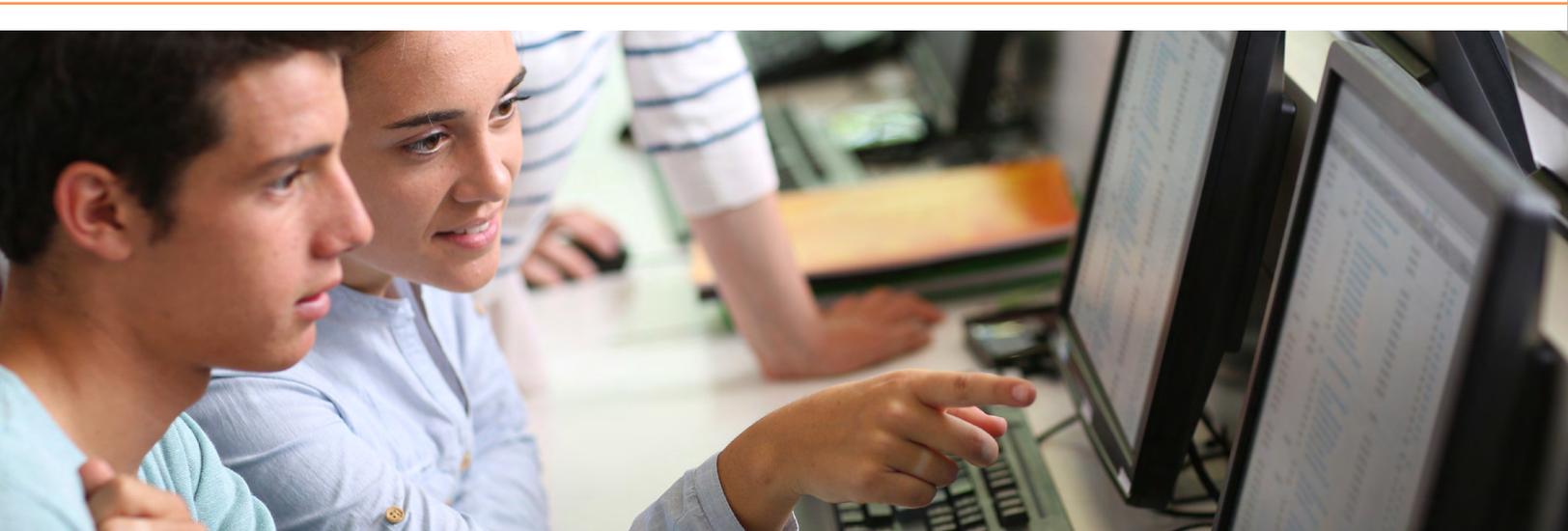
Overview of class completion

Progress bar relative to student's % completion of class

52%

Progress bar relative to goal completion date

60%

Progress bar relative to 9 month completion

55%

Completed Assessments Summary

Total completed assessments:	60
Total required assessments:	116
% of course completed:	52%
Assessments since Jan 2, 2021	3

Overall grade, midterm, final

OVERALL GRADE	Midterm	Final
90.3%	87%	-

Completion % by unit

Unit 1a	Unit 1b	Unit 2a	Unit 2b	Unit 3a	Unit 3b	Unit 4	Unit 5a	Unit 5b	Unit 6a	Unit 6b
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Completion % and grade by quarter	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Completed assessments	26	31	3	0
Total required assessments	26	31	26	33
Percent of quarter completed	100%	100%	12%	0%
Quarterly grade	88%	94%	89%	-

Learning Facilitator comments: Good job this week John. Always remember when you're asking a question in ASL you raise your eyebrows. Please review my video feedback.
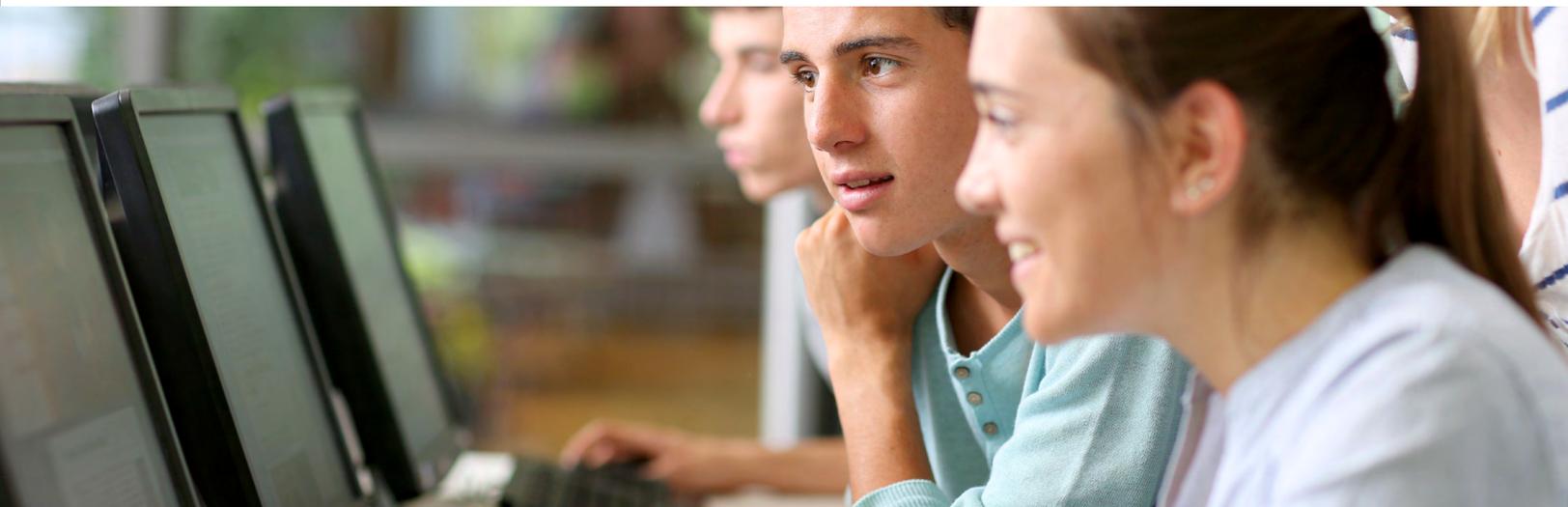
10 | Credentials and schools we work with:

Emily Fermier is the company co-founder and Curriculum Director. She brings a wealth of ASL experience to ASL Virtual Academy. Her experience includes teaching, interpreting, and curriculum development. By studying the language since the age of 11 she was able to secure employment by the age of 19 as an ASL interpreter. She has been teaching ASL as a foreign language to high school and college students since 2003, and is quite distinguished in the field of American Sign Language education:

Master of Arts in Integrated Teaching and Learning with Specialization in ASL Education, from The Ohio State University	National Interpreters Certification with Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf ASL	ASL Teachers' Association certified

For a list of schools we've worked with go to: https://www.aslvirtualacademy.com/asl-for-credit

11 | Checklist on how to get started with ASL Virtual Academy

Getting started with a cohort of students

IN ADVANCE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR...	A FEW WEEKS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS....	WEEK 1-2 OF SCHOOL STARTING...
1. Review this guide and share with other stakeholders at your school 2. Schedule a Zoom meeting with our Program Director a. Goals of Zoom meeting: answer questions this guide doesn't cover and learn more about your school/students 3. Determine estimated roster, and device sourcing (laptops, Chromebooks). Ideally it's a 1:1 student:device. 4. Review engagement agreement and have all stakeholders Docusign.	1. Provide finalized roster including student name, parent/guardian name, and associated emails 2. Have your IT Dept "whitelist" our emails so communication to students/parents is not blocked 3. Provide contact information of the Learning Coach so we can schedule/conduct a 1:1 training 4. Schedule initial "meet and greet" video conference for students	1. We send login information to all students 2. Conduct live "meet and greet" video conference with students to provide proper orientation 3. Students get started learning ASL!

Getting started with 1-2 students

The checklist on how to get started with a small number of students is often more abbreviated. Students are usually responsible for providing their own device and payment for the class. Additionally, the Learning Coach is often the parent/guardian. In these cases, the school has two main responsibilities: 1) make students aware of our program 2) allow credit to be earned for taking the class.

Payment options:

Payment options will vary depending on a few factors. Schools offering a cohort and paying on behalf of students are emailed an invoice with accepted payment methods of check or ACH transfer. Schools NOT paying student tuition, can direct parent/guardians to individually sign up with a credit card on our website at: https://www.aslvirtualacademy.com/sign-up-for-class

"

What I was hoping to get out of this class was the correct grammar, facial expressions, and signs so I could sign well, and it was so cool because I got all of that, and I can't wait to move on to ASL 2 to learn more from ASL Virtual Academy.

– Ava W. from Texas

"

What I liked most about the class was the signing assignments because I got to actually use what I learned. It was really easy to submit my video, and then I'd get feedback about how well I signed. This part was really cool. It was also so much fun to sign live with Neressa" [Neressa is a Deaf native signer].

– Emily W. from Wisconsin

"

"I struggled so badly in Spanish. I just couldn't do it. ASL came to me so much better and I loved it. This class made me feel good about myself because I was successful with it."

– Emma B. from Ohio

"

I would highly recommend this class. My daughter was able to get her questions answered quickly and was able to use ASL with a couple at our church. It was so exciting to see.

– Laura B. from Ohio (Mother of Emma B.)

"

The video lessons helped me develop my skills and I liked how I could watch them a few times. I sometimes get frustrated in my other classes because when I don't understand something I can't watch the lecture again.

– Grace C. from Washington

"

I would definitely recommend this class to my friends. It was fun and well organized and I learned a lot. I loved that I could go at my own pace.

– Marie N. from Florida

"

French was very difficult for me to learn because it was all talking, and it was hard for me to remember everything from my notes. But in ASL I saw everything with the videos which really helped me because I'm a visual learner.

– Zion B. from Illinois

"

I liked how this teacher was willing to actually help me progress in ASL. She was really nice and helpful. I liked how it was taught online and all the questions I had were answered quickly, and I'm now conversational in ASL!!

– Michael S. from Oregon

Get in touch with us

We sincerely appreciate you taking the time to review our program and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you live. Feel free to reach out to us at any time. We look forward to working with you and your students!

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Co-Founder &
Head of Business Development

(614) 588-2758 📞

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