

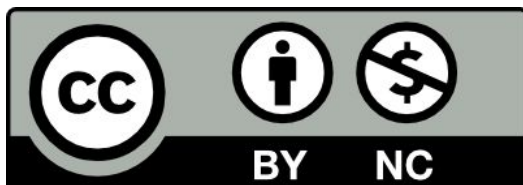


**Improving Rural Interpreter Skills**

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# RIPPLE Orientation



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# Overview & Objectives

**Overview:** This module will provide an overview of what to expect in the Rural Interpreters Promoting Professional Learning and Engagement (RIPPLE) program.

## Learning Outcomes and Objectives

**Upon Completion of this module participants will be able to:**

1. Define the IRIS Vision & Values and the Community of Learning (COL) model.
2. Describe online learning interaction styles.
3. Specify ways to improve personal online learning interaction styles.



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# What to Expect?, Part I

## Why you are here . . .

You have been selected to be a part of this program due to your exemplary commitment to this field. You have shown dedication to your professional development and a commitment to shared learning spaces via the IRIS Community of Learning (COL) model.

Over the course of this program, you will obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to support your local and online interpreting communities as a mentor and facilitator. While your participation in this program may lead to an opportunity to engage as a facilitator or mentor in the IRIS program, it does not guarantee you a position in doing so.

Upon the conclusion of the IRIS Project in 2026, all of the IRIS materials and Canvas courses will be available online and as an open-source resource for download and educational use. Your training here allows you to be one step ahead with the tools to utilize these products as they become available.

In short, you are here to pay IRIS forward. As rural interpreters, we often have too few colleagues to draw upon for guidance and support. Within this program, we are collectively building capacity one ripple at a time.



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# What to Expect?, Part II

## Engaging with intention . . .

Your commitment to this course will require intentionality which is manifested in the following ways: support more novice colleagues, stay connected with your COL, and continue your own personal growth.

This training has a substantial focus on creating spaces for interpreters who come from marginalized backgrounds. Together we will be exploring what it means to facilitate communities of learning and mentor interpreters from both similar and different backgrounds than yourself. As we navigate what it means to create equitable learning environments, you will reflectively unpack [systematic power and privilege](#). At times this might be uncomfortable and challenging. Conversely, at times this might be validating and inspiring.

However these discussions may impact you, IRIS is here to support you. You can connect with your facilitator(s) and IRIS leadership. If you are ever in a space where you feel you need to talk to someone other than IRIS staff for personalized and private support, please contact the [UNC Counseling Center](#). They can support you in finding someone to talk to or provide assistance with connecting to local resources.



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# What to Expect?, Part III

## Planning your time . . .

In order to quantify the work you will be doing in hours, expect to spend approximately 10-12 hours engaging with the course content each week. This will include completing module activities, assignments, and attending synchronous sessions.

The pace of this training is similar to that of the IRIS Connections Opportunities Resources and Education (CORE): Initiative program. You will progress through the content modules, one at a time. There will be built in catch-up dates along the way. Please review your course map, posted on the syllabus page of this course to see all pertinent due dates.



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# What to Expect?, Part IV

## Module Sequencing

There are 11 modules of learning in the RIPPLE program. Sequenced intentionally to maximize your learning.

- Modules 1-5 provide you with the tools to begin thinking about applying the frameworks used in the IRIS Project with participants. These modules will require you to think back to your own experiences as a learner and reflect upon how you will support the future of this field.
- Modules 6-11 are applying what you've learned in Modules 1-5 into practice. You will practice mentoring with another colleague, analyze synchronous and asynchronous facilitated discussions, and have a chance to practice the art of asking questions throughout.

Before completing this Orientation module you will select which synchronous session interested in facilitating over the course of this program. You will reflect upon this facilitation experience at the conclusion of this program.

Embrace the journey . . .



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# IRIS Vision & Values

## Getting (re)focused . . .

The IRIS Project's vision is to increase the quantity and quality of interpreters working and living in rural settings by cultivating educational opportunities and sustainable connections that support professional growth.

The vision of the IRIS Project is based on the following values:

- recognizes that rural interpreters experience professional isolation with limited educational opportunities,
- upholds ASL as the shared language of our space together,
- creates the intentional space for rural interpreters to build an ethical support community,
- implements communities of learning (COL) that have the shared experience of living and working in rural settings,
- requires that diverse perspectives are intentionally sought to provide depth and balance to the learning experience and one's personal growth, and
- believes dialogic engagement via peer interaction is centered on exploration and discovery as a pathway to learning.





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# IRIS Community of Learning (COL)

## Getting (re)focused . . .

Within IRIS, a Community of Learning (COL) is a diverse group of interpreters who share a passion for what they do and commit to meet regularly to reflect on their experiences as practitioners for the purpose of deepening their understanding of the nature of the work of interpreters, gaining new insight, and growing together in knowledge, skill, and expertise.

A community of learning involves:

- Shared values and vision.
- Acknowledgement and respect of how all learners bring value to the community.
- Collective responsibility for learning.
- Ongoing dialogue, reflective inquiry and practice.
- Mutual trust, respect, and support.
- Collaboration focused on growth together.

# Definitions, Part I

## Shared Definitions

Before progressing any further, let's ensure we are all on the same page with a few concepts you will see regularly throughout this course. Please note that these definitions are *specific* to the IRIS Project.

- **Participant:** an individual who is connected to the IRIS program as a learner of the content created by IRIS.
- **Facilitator:** an individual who supports a COL in their journey of online learning via a curriculum developed and designed for rural interpreters. A facilitator will engage regularly with a COL via synchronous and asynchronous means.
- **Mentor:** an individual that supports a participant both one-on-one and via small group synchronous sessions. The support provided by the mentor is participant-driven, focusing on the needs and goals identified by the participant.

While the task of facilitating and mentoring on the surface look different, the principles are the same. We will explore these principles together through the next 11 modules.



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# Definitions, Part II

Throughout your time with IRIS you will notice the following words used, with intention. We suggest should you be curious to learn more, see the additional references and resources provided.

## **deaf**

The term “deaf”, with a lowercase, is used to encapsulate the multitude of identities and experiences of all people who identify as d/Deaf. This includes people who are; DeafBlind, deaf disabled, late deafened, hard of hearing, and culturally Deaf. Kusters & Friedner (2015) argue, “We write *deaf* with a lowercase ‘d’ because we see *deaf* as more encompassing, less politicized, and less context-dependent than *Deaf*,” (p. ix).

There is an exception you may notice throughout this curriculum. “In the sign language interpreting profession, Deaf interpreters are labeled with the capitalized letter, D to represent their linguistic and cultural expertise.” (Sheneman, 2018, p. 1).



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# Definitions, Part III

## Coda

**CODA** (in all caps) is in reference to the name of the organization, [CODA International](#), as was envisioned by Millie Brother who coined the term Coda, referring to those individuals who are hearing people with deaf parents. CODA International's mission is to celebrate the unique heritage and multicultural identities of adult hearing individuals with deaf parent(s).

**Coda** (capital C lowercase oda) is in reference to an identity, as exhibited on the [CODA International website](#) and the other resources referenced below, **coda** (all lowercase) is in reference to [music](#). While the differences between the three are subtle, they are important.

### Additional resources:

- [The Case for Heritage ASL Instruction for Hearing Heritage Signers](#) by Isakson, S.K. (2018)
- [A Short Introduction to Heritage Signers](#) by Pichler, D.C., Lillo-Martin, D., & Palmer, J.L. (2018)
- [Lost in the Shuffle: Deaf-Parented Interpreters and Their Paths to Interpreting Careers](#) by Williamson, A. (2016)
- [Cost of Invisibility: Codas and the Sign Language Interpreting Profession](#) by Williamson, A. (2012)



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# Interaction via Online Learning

## Getting Started . . .

Watch this video: [Three Types of Interaction Through Online Learning](#). While watching this video, think about how the three types of interaction apply to you as a participant in an IRIS COL embracing the IRIS Vision & Values.

1. Learner/Learner - via collegial discussion in your COL.
2. Learner/Instructor - via engagement with your facilitator(s).
3. Learner/Content - via your connection to the materials presented.

# Setting Your Intention



**NOTE:** You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment

## Original post directions:

As you get started here in the RIPPLE program, think about setting your personal and professional intentions for interaction during this course and consider the following two questions. You may write your responses in your own journal to review at a later time.

1. What type of interaction(s) are successful for you as a learner?
2. What type of interaction(s) would you like to personally improve upon as you progress thru the RIPPLE program?

**No response post is required.**



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# Synchronous Session Facilitation Sign-Up

In this program, you will put into practice the skills needed to become an effective facilitator and mentor. Over the course of this training, *all participants will facilitate* a synchronous session meeting. Depending on the size of your COL, this may happen more than once or be done in pairs. Utilize the Canvas discussion board to select which module synchronous session you would like to facilitate. Please list your first *and* second choice. Your facilitator(s) will work with the group to ensure everyone has a module assigned and is prepared to facilitate their assigned module synchronous session.

RIPPLE modules listed in sequence:

1. Adult Learning Principles
2. Power Dynamics
3. Demand Control-Schema Applied
4. Role-Space Applied
5. Integrated Model of Interpreting Applied
6. Growth Mindset
7. Mentoring in Focus
8. Mentoring in Practice
9. Facilitating in Focus
10. Facilitating in Practice
11. Introspection: Discovery & Reflection



**NOTE:** You have to log into Canvas to complete this assignment



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# References

Gallaudet University Instructional Designer Services. (2022, April 7). *Tip of the week #50: Three types of interaction through online learning* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/CrIG1P2hOE8>

Project CLIMB. (2021, December 7). *Systems thinking: What is a system?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/cMfgS8zl6S8>





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