



## Questions? Contact Us

### Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning

Gallaudet University  
SLCC 1200  
800 Florida Avenue NE  
Washington DC 20002  
202-651-5866

**Web:** [VL2.gallaudet.edu](http://VL2.gallaudet.edu)

**Email:** [VL2@gallaudet.edu](mailto:VL2@gallaudet.edu)

**WIKI:** <http://vl2wiki.editme.com/>

The Gallaudet University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects has approved this study.



## The School Partnership Program

Collaborating to Explore Questions of Visual Learning and Visual Language Acquisition and Literacy

## About Our Study

The Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2), located at Gallaudet University in Washington DC, was established to investigate how deaf individuals acquire and use language and literacy. As a VL2 Partnership School, you have the opportunity to participate in studies that help educators and parents understand and acquire a better understanding of how learning emerges.

One of these studies, our Early Education Longitudinal Study (VL2-EELS), explores the ways in which family and school factors influence how young deaf children learn. By tracking the growth of 3, 4 and 5-year olds over a three-year period, we will discover more about the roles that parental involvement, educational environment, early exposure to languages, and many other factors play in the development of reading and other cognitive skills. Because we hope to follow the same children for three years, we will be able to answer many questions about how young deaf children learn over time during a very critical period in their cognitive development and how they make the transition to elementary school. This is the first large-scale national study of early education practices for deaf students. The results will directly affect educational practices for this young age group.

We invite you to collaborate with us and other School Partners on this important project.



## Ideas We Will Explore

*VL2-EELS will seek answers to many questions, including:*

- How early acquisition of language, including visual and/or auditory/oral language, may lead to higher levels of academic achievement.
- What constitutes normal language development for children who acquire sign language as a first language.
- The best strategies for teachers and parents to use to engage their deaf children visually to help them learn.
- The ways in which family support contributes to school achievement.
- What features of currently employed early intervention programs effectively prepare young deaf children to learn in school.



# VEELS2



VL2 is supported by National Science Foundation Grant Number SBE 0541953



## Data We Will Collect

- ✓ Surveys of early childhood program directors and elementary school principals.
- ✓ Surveys of the teachers of students participating in the study.
- ✓ Surveys of parents or guardians of students participating in the study.
- ✓ Direct assessments of participating students in the areas of cognition, language, and achievement. Assessments will be conducted by VL2 staff certified to administer the study tools and working under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist.

Data collection will occur in the winter and spring months in 2010, 2011, and 2012. All data collected will remain confidential. Individual names or other identifiers will be removed from all computer files that are developed for analysis. All participating families will be able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

### Which Children Are Eligible to be

## Included in VL2-EELS?

VL2 is particularly interested in studying children with significant bi-lateral hearing loss (defined as having an average unaided hearing threshold of 60 dB or greater in their better ear) who come from all types of family and communication backgrounds and who have not been diagnosed with severe learning or cognitive impairments in addition to their hearing loss. We seek participation of children with and without cochlear implants and other assistive devices, and we are interested in drawing participants from a broad spectrum of educational and communication programming options. Participating children should have passed their third birthday as of September 1, 2009, but have not have passed their sixth birthday by September 1, 2009. All children in the 3 to 5 age range as of September 1, 2009 are eligible to participate.

## What You Will Be Asked to Do

### As a collaborator on this project you will be asked to:

- Identify children and families from your program who match our criteria for being included in this study.
- Distribute information packets to parents and help VL2 recruit them for the study.
- Help to facilitate and coordinate the collection of information at your school.
- Help us respond to questions and concerns from parents and teachers.
- Ensure that surveys distributed to teachers and program directors are completed and returned.
- Help us track students whose families may move (or whose programs may change) over the three years of the study.

Nominal monetary incentives or gifts (that will never exceed \$20 in value per participant) will be offered to children (a \$5 toy), parents (\$20 per survey plus \$15 travel allowance if they need to make a special trip to school for the direct assessments), teachers (\$10 per completed survey—some teachers will complete surveys for more than one child), and program directors for participating in the study (\$20 – one survey per program). VL2 will also donate a \$100 gift certificate from amazon.com to the libraries of each participating School Partner as an expression of our appreciation for your participation.

## Our Team

Our team of experts, drawn from multiple disciplines, is committed to conducting research of the highest scientific caliber, and also to sharing important findings with educators and parents in ways that will directly benefit the children we serve. The VL2-EELS project leaders are:

**Thomas Allen, Ph.D.**, Gallaudet University, Co-Project Director and VL2 Principal Investigator

**Sen Qi, Ph.D.**, Gallaudet University, Co-Project Director and Psychometrician

**Donna Moreere, Ph.D.**, Gallaudet University, Neurocognitive Assessment Director

**Carol Connor, Ph.D.**, Florida Center for Reading Research, Florida State University, Reading and Early Literacy Consultant

### If Your Program Agrees to Participate

Complete the enclosed VL2-EELS program enrollment form and return it to VL2. We will then prepare and send to you packets of information designed to inform parents about the project. We will ask you to distribute these packets to the parents of children who meet our criteria for participation in the study. Parents who agree to participate will communicate their consent in writing directly with VL2, and their children will be enrolled in the study. VL2 will work directly with the School Partner coordinator to coordinate the data collection schedule in your program.

