Study Guide

INTR 113
Discourse Analysis

Spring 2015
University of Northern Colorado

American Sign Language – English Interpretation Program

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Course Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a foundation in discourse analysis by analyzing the context and intentions of the people within various communication events.

In order to produce effective interpretations (whether it is in ASL, contact signing, or a manual code for English), it is essential to understand the underlying meaning of the source language, and to be able to produce the same meaning in the target language. This underlying meaning, the coherence, requires much more than a simple understanding of the words or signs that are strung together. It requires an understanding of the context, the implicit intentions, the connotations of the words and signs, the goal of the speaker/signer, and the goal of the audience.

In this course, you will discuss the impact of understanding discourse in everyday communication. Then, you will apply this to language and communication in a variety of settings and contexts.

Impact

Linguistic knowledge and analysis is fundamental to interpreting. This course provides a foundation for life-long development of cognitive processing, metalinguistic awareness, and self-assessment skills.

This course engages you in an ongoing analysis of how specific linguistic features are applied during discourse in a variety of settings and contexts—the majority of activities engage you in reading about a specific feature and then analyzing the use of the feature during actual discourse events. This course requires a much higher level of analytical skills than has been required in previous courses.

This course marks a shift in focus from establishing the theoretical foundations of linguistics and language use to an exploration of how the theories directly impact you in communication situations. It is also significant because the process of problem solving will result in the identification of specific strategies for managing and addressing interpreting challenges later on. This level of analytical thinking and problem-solving is what marks the work of professionals and the expectation for this level of higher order thinking skills will continue in the remaining courses within the program.

At a more pragmatic level, this course focuses on the need to understand the whole message in order to produce an effective, adequate interpretation. It is essential that interpreters understand that interpreting is more than the sum of the words or signs that they see and sign, hear and say. As an interpreter, you must understand the impact of interpreting the message.
Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of discourse as dynamic interaction, especially in terms of conversational exchanges in English and ASL, including open and close signals, backchannel signals, turnover signals, bracket signals, preempt signals, and other discourse signals that mark various communicative events.

- Understand the sociolinguistic aspects of communication (i.e., variation based on features such as social setting and functions, register, age, gender and region) and how these aspects of communication specifically apply in various contexts.

- Discuss Grice’s maxims and how these maxims impact communication events.

- Discuss the discourse structure of interaction as it is interpreted.

- Define the structure of communicative exchanges in ASL and English discourse.

- Discuss the implications of the above analyses for interpreting interaction in various contexts (e.g., classrooms, business transactions, job interviews, and doctor’s appointments), and identify strategies for managing the implications.

- Apply a 10-step discourse analysis process to examine the meaning and structure of ASL and English texts in various contexts.

- Apply the analysis of ASL and English texts in various contexts to retell the texts in both the source and target language.

- Demonstrate accuracy and equivalency of meaning in retelling texts in ASL and English.
Plagiarism Policy

**Policy on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one’s own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another’s work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof (UNC definition). Regarding written work in particular, direct quotations, statements which are a result of paraphrasing or summarizing the work of another, and other information which is not considered common knowledge must be cited or acknowledged, usually in the form of a footnote. Quotation marks or a proper form of indentation shall be used to indicate all direct quotes. Regarding class projects, you are not to use as your entire presentation the completed works of faculty members, fully imported websites, or any other body of work in which you are not the author. Of course, with proper referencing, you can import portions of such works and websites to enhance and illustrate your presentation, and you can provide references to these other works for students who have an interest in pursuing a topic further. For further information, go to the following website: [http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/defining_plagiarism.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/defining_plagiarism.html)

Inclusivity Statement

The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty and staff within CEBS will be accepting of differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and world views may be different from their own. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in...educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in...educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See [http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm](http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm)).

Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity ([http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity](http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity)).

Students with Disabilities

**Accommodations Statement:** Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, Voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit [www.unco.edu/dss](http://www.unco.edu/dss) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
### Grading Scale

The points for all the assignments in a course will add up to 100 and letter grades are assigned as follows for UNDERGRADUATE classes:

- **A** = 100 - 91 superior achievement of course objectives
- **B** = 90 - 81 above average achievement of objectives  
  *(Reminder: you must maintain at least a “B” per class to meet graduation requirements)*
- **C/D** = 80 - 61 below acceptable achievement of objectives
- 60 or below is considered not passing.

### Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will be accepted and graded for up to 72 hours after the due date and time but the final grade will be dropped one letter. Late assignments submitted after the 72 hours that have not been approved in advance with the respective Section Facilitator will NOT be graded and students will receive a zero as the assignment grade.

Extensions for assignment due date and time must be approved in advance with the respective Section Facilitator based on the following criteria:

- The extension is requested at least 24 hours in advance of the due date and time.
- An extension is requested no more than once during any given semester.
- **No late work will be accepted in the last three days of this course.**

Exceptions to the above criteria will only be considered based on documented evidence of special circumstances—such as illness, hospitalization or death of a family member.
Required Course Materials

Textbooks


Media (www.uncbooks.com)


Received in INTR 111:


- Note: The following audio clip will be available in your course
  English: “Where is the Grand Canyon?”

eReserves


The following article is also available in eReserves as a resource to you, not a required reading:

Course Preview

This course builds on your newly acquired knowledge of linguistics from INTR 111: ASL Linguistics. You have already studied how a language is constructed and how it is different from communication. Now you will explore how community members use language.

In this course, you will be studying discourse, or language in use. As you analyze language in use, you will see that understanding meaning in everyday communication requires much more than just an understanding of individual words or signs. It requires an understanding of the context and intentions of the people you communicate with. Even in everyday communication, you have to “interpret” what you think the other person means. The factors that you use to help with this “interpretation” are the basis of this course. You will begin with general communication, and then the focus will shift to communication in a variety of settings and contexts — how you understand what a communicator means, how you acquire the rules for interacting successfully in a variety of settings and contexts, and how language use affects what and how you access information in those settings and contexts. This course continues to build the foundation you will need to perform your duties as a professional interpreter.

This course focuses on the conversational exchanges in English and ASL including: structure of exchanges, initiation and response, language use and underlying meanings, conversational roles, the use of nonverbal and paralinguistic aspects, linguistic structure and propositional analysis. Also included will be the application of discourse analysis techniques to a variety of settings and contexts and to the task of interpreting.

Roll up your sleeves and welcome to what is the basis for producing an effective and appropriate interpretation, Discourse Analysis!

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Discourse Analysis

During this lesson, you will be introduced to Discourse Analysis by reading Deborah Tannen’s book, “That’s not what I meant,” and seeing a PowerPoint presentation on Discourse Analysis. You will record a natural conversation with family or friends. This recording will provide data for many of the assignments you do throughout this lesson. The analyses will provide stimulus for online discussion with your peers.

Lesson Objectives:

- Describe how communication style is influenced by ethnicity, age, class, gender and personality.
- Describe ways in which different communication styles contribute to misunderstandings between communicators.

Lesson 2 - Aspects of Discourse: System Constraints

In the next two lessons, you will discuss two perspectives of discourse features as presented in Hatch (1992), Discourse and Language Education: system constraints and
ritual constraints. In this lesson, you will explore system constraints, features that are universal; they occur in all languages. In this lesson you will begin the exploration of specific aspects of discourse—such as backchanneling, openings and closings, coherence and cohesion, bracketing signals, turn-taking, and interruptions and overlap. You will discuss Grice’s maxims and how these maxims impact communication events. In addition to exploring the definition and characteristics of each of these aspects, you will analyze taped discourse events to isolate evidence of these discourse aspects, and discuss your observations with your online peers.

Lesson Objectives:

- List and give examples of system constraints.
- Given an examples of an English and an ASL conversation, identify system constraints.

Important Note: While reading this textbook, remember that Hatch is primarily concerned with spoken languages. Try to apply the concepts she discusses to signed languages, specifically ASL. For example, in chapter 1, Hatch discusses “acoustically adequate and interpretable messages.” If you consider for a moment the Deaf or Deaf Blind individual, “acoustic” becomes “physical.” These are simple, yet profound aspects of communication. Messages must be both physically and linguistically accessible to the receiver in order to be effective. Rather than “acoustically and interpretable,” consider these notions as “physically and linguistically accessible or interpretable” messages. Although these requirements seem simple, they have tremendous ramifications related to the interpretability of any interaction.

Lesson 3 – Aspects of Discourse: Ritual Constraints

Ritual constraints are the ways that each distinct language performs these universal functions. You will discuss the concept of discourse as dynamic interaction, especially in terms of conversational exchanges in English and ASL, including open and close signals, backchannel signals, turnover signals, bracket signals, preempt signals, and other discourse signals that mark various communicative events.

Lesson Objectives:

- Define ritual constraint and give examples in ASL and English.
- Compare and contrast how ritual constraints influence how system constraints are realized in English and ASL

Lesson 4 – Focusing on ASL Discourse Analysis

In this lesson, you will look at research that has been done on discourse analysis in ASL. You will read one section in Valli, Lucas, and Mulrooney: Part 6: Unit 24 and complete the homework assignment from that Unit. You will review information about bilingualism and language contact in Unit 3. In Part 6, you will read an article by Melanie Metzger and Ben Bahan.
Lesson Objectives:

- Discuss features of ASL discourse.
- Given an ASL sample, identify discourse features such as turn-taking, repair, constructed action, and cohesion.

Lesson 5 – Speech Acts and Speech Events

There are many approaches to discussing context. In this lesson, you will study context by looking at the notion of speech acts and speech events, as discussed in Hatch. Speech acts can be categorized according to function. The intent of a speaker may not match the literal meaning of a sentence, and analysis is required to determine the function of the utterance. You will analyze speech acts in your own recorded conversation and discuss them with your classmates online.

Lesson Objectives:

- Explain the relationship between syntax and speech act function.
- Given speech events ASL and English, identify speech act functions.
- Compare and contrast how speech acts are expressed in ASL and English.

Lesson 6 – Rhetorical Analysis

In this lesson, you will study how monologic discourse varies depending on genre type. You will select a section of your recorded conversation where someone is producing a brief monologue and you will analyze this section for monologic genre. You will be introduced to artistic genres in ASL discourse by reading Part 5: Unit 4 Language as Art in Valli, Lucas, and Mulrooney.

Lesson Objectives:

- Identify structural components characteristic of rhetorical genres in ASL and English
- Given an ASL and English samples, identify rhetorical genre

Lesson 7 – Coherence, Cohesion, Deixis, and Discourse

Speakers/signers construct discourse that is organized and makes sense to the receiver. In this lesson, you will examine the ways that people create coherent and cohesive texts. You will look at the patterns that are used by speakers/signers to develop texts that tie together in congruent ways. You will look at your recorded conversation and the “Snowmobile” story identifying and analyzing the cohesive devices used by English users and an ASL user.

Lesson Objectives:
Given English and ASL samples, identify cohesive ties, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical ties.

Identify deixis in both ASL and English samples.

Lesson 8 – Pragmatics, Prosody, and Contextual Analysis

What makes a person look like they are a native user of a language? What makes a person look like a novice language user or a person with an accent? In this lesson, you will examine pragmatic and prosodic features, the intricacies of language that are difficult to define and even harder to identify. You will also look at “contextual analysis” as it relates to linguistic form.

Lesson Objectives:

- Identify features of prosody in ASL and English.
- Apply knowledge of ASL prosody to own use of ASL.

Lesson 9 – Layers of Discourse Analysis

In this lesson, you will study discourse analysis using a combination of the strategies you read about in Hatch’s text. As you read this chapter, begin to think about how you and your classmates might apply this type of analysis to your work as a second language learner of ASL.

Lesson Objectives:

- Apply analysis strategies covered in the course, including system and ritual constraints, speech acts, genre, cohesion and pragmatics to produce an analysis of a spoken English conversation.

Lesson 10 – Content Mapping

Content mapping is a technique that is used to analyze the meaning of a message. In this lesson, you will learn about content mapping and begin to study its application to interpreting. You will read “Content Mapping: A Text Analysis and Mnemonic Tool for Interpreters,” an article by Anna Witter-Merithew and apply the process by mapping the content of the “Snowmobile” story.

Lesson Objectives:

- Use content mapping to analyze an ASL story.
- Discuss how content mapping enhances comprehension of the story.

Lesson 11 – 10-Step Discourse Analysis Process

In this lesson, you will read another article by Witter-Merithew called, “Understanding the Meaning of Texts and Reinforcing Foundation Skills through Discourse Analysis.” You will view a PowerPoint presentation on the 10-Step Process for Discourse Analysis and consider the relationship of the 10-Step Process to cognitive processes of
interpreting (anticipation, comprehension, restructuring, transfer, and formulation). Finally, you will apply the first nine steps of the 10-step process in Assignment 4.

Lesson Objectives:

- Describe the 10-step process.
- Apply the 10-step process to an ASL and an English text.

Lesson 12 – Self-Assessment Strategies and Techniques and the Application of Self-Assessment to Language Performance of Self

In this lesson, you will transcribe Step 9 for the ASL target text, “Air Fresheners: How to make your home smell nice” and the English target text, “Bacteria: Kinds of Bacteria.” You will conduct a self-analysis based on the discourse features you have learned about in this course, determine patterns of success and areas needing improvement, and consider priorities for skill development.

Lesson Objectives:

- Create a translation of ASL-to-English and English-to-ASL texts.
- Determine effective features of a translation
- Determine areas needing improvement in a translation.

Lesson 13 – Feedback and Peer Review

In this lesson, you will read an article on effective feedback and practice providing feedback by conducting a peer review of another student. You will review their self-analysis, patterns of success and areas needing improvement, and their priorities for skill development. You will provide feedback that is descriptive and specific, non-judgmental, and focuses on the product.

Lesson Objectives:

- Review the effectiveness of a translation.
- Share feedback related to observation of a peer’s work.
- Engage in professional discussions about the work.

Lesson 14 – Conclusion: Discourse Analysis and Interpreting

In this final lesson, you will discuss the fundamental relationship between discourse analysis and interpreting. You will reflect on the strategies you have studied and practiced throughout the course and consider future applications to making your interpretations more reliable and accurate.

Lesson Objectives:

- Define discourse analysis and describe its importance for interpreters.
# Course Roadmap

Use this as your “map” while traveling on your distance-learning journey. All the information you need to complete the course is here in one location. Use the last column to check off each item as you complete it. Icons in the roadmap are used to indicate activities/assignments worth points for grading and non-web activities (readings, media, etc.). Dates before or next to any activity indicate specific dates for that item.

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>![icon]</td>
<td>Assignment 1 includes participation in the online discussions, marked with this icon.</td>
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<td>![icon]</td>
<td>Assignments and homework marked with this icon should be submitted to the drop box.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Lesson 1 – Introduction to Discourse Analysis</th>
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<td>1/20-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>![icon] Due: 1/26</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Record a natural conversation in your dominant language (usually spoken English). Please see more detailed information on how to do this assignment under Assignments – Assignment 2 “Recorded Conversation”. Be sure to take a look at the rubric for this assignment to know what will be expected. Post the sociolinguistic description of the context of the conversation in the Assignment 2 discussion forum.</td>
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<th>Lesson 2 – Aspects of Discourse: System Constraints</th>
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### Points | Dates | Activities | Done!
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| 1/27-31 | 2/2 | **Online discussion:** Identify system constraints in your recorded conversation and in the “Kansas” and “Louisiana” conversations from your textbook DVD. See “Online Discussion” document for details under Assignments. Respond to at least one peer’s posting. | ☐

**Lesson 3 – Aspects of Discourse: Ritual Constraints**

| 2/2 | 3.1 | **Textbook:** Hatch, *Discourse and Language Education*, read Chapter 2. | ☐

| 2/3-7 | 3.2 | **Online discussion:** Post your response to item #1 on page 65. Respond to at least one peer’s posting. | ☐

**Lesson 4 – Focusing on ASL Discourse Analysis**

| 2/9 | 4.1 | **Textbook:** Valli, Lucas, & Mulrooney, Part 5, Unit 2, ASL Discourse (pp.179-186). | ☐

| 2/10-14 | 4.2 | **Homework:** Complete Homework Assignment #19 on page 186. (You will post this for 4.5) For numbers one and two, **answer in terms of spoken English conversation (not ASL).** Discuss the spoken English words you would use. If you do not have access to ASL, you may use formal and informal English for number three instead. Or you may use Internet ASL vlogs. | ☐

| 2/16 | 4.3 | **Textbook:** Valli, Lucas,, & Mulrooney, Part 6, Unit 25, Bilingualism and Language Contact (pp. 187-194). | ☐

| 2/16 | 4.4 | **Textbook:** Valli, Lucas, & Mulrooney, Part 6, Unit 24, *Discourse Analysis*, Metzger & Bahan (pp. 490-538). | ☐

| 2/17-21 | 4.5 | **Online Discussion:** Post homework Assignment #19 online for peer comment and discussion. Provide feedback to at least one student. Respond to at least one peer’s posting. | ☐
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<td>3/14-3/22 – Spring Break at UNC!</td>
<td>Lesson 8 – Pragmatics, Prosody, and Contextual Analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Lesson 11 – 10-Step Discourse Analysis Process</strong></td>
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<td>Post at least one original response, and respond to at least one peer’s posting.</td>
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| 14.2   |       | **Congratulations!**  
Complete the online evaluation and you’re done!  
Final grades will be posted within 3 days of the end of the semester. | ☐     |
Assignments

NOTE: The Assignment Overview below gives only a general idea of each assignment. In order to complete the assignments successfully, you will need to download the Assignments Descriptions found in the Assignments area of the class and follow the instructions and rubric (if applicable) for each assignment. You should also download and read the rubric for each assignment before completing it.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| Assignment 1 | Participation
Participate in online discussions:
Responses to the posts of other students should be thoughtful constructive, descriptive, and non-judgmental. Support your ideas with specific examples. | 30 |
| Assignment 2 | Recorded Conversation
Record a natural conversation in English (e.g., a pizza party, a class you are taking, an Avon party, or a holiday meal). The clip should be 45 to 60 minutes in length. This conversation will be used throughout the course for discourse analysis practice.
Write a sociolinguistic description of the context of the conversation, including the participants, the setting, and the purpose of the interaction and post it in the Assignment 2 discussion forum. | 10 |
| Assignment 3 | Discourse Analysis Paper: Prepare a paper that analyzes and compares the recorded conversation you produced and the Kansas conversation from the Valli, Lucas, and Mulrooney DVD. In the paper, analyze and compare the use of system and ritual constraints, speech acts, and cohesive devices (including deixis). You may include any other salient discourse analysis features.
This paper should be 5-7 pages, double-spaced. Submit to the Assignment tool. | 15 |
| Assignment 4 | Application of the 10-Step Process:
Part 1: Complete steps 1-8 on the following texts:
   - English: “Where is the Grand Canyon?”
   - ASL: “Bacteria: Kinds of bacteria”
Part 2: Complete a typed and double-spaced reflection on your | 20 |
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<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Assignment 5</td>
<td><strong>Recording, Transcription and Skills Analysis Assignment – English to ASL</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Record Step 9 of the 10-step process for “Where is the Grand Canyon?” and create a verbatim transcription of the re-telling.  &lt;br&gt;Create a written analysis of the performance incorporating a discussion of the discourse features you studied during this course, including, but not limited to system and ritual constraints, speech acts, and cohesive devices (including deixis). Submit to the assignment tool.</td>
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<td>Assignment 6</td>
<td><strong>Recording, Transcription and Skills Analysis Assignment – ASL to English</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Record Step 9 of the 10-step process for “Bacteria: Kinds of Bacteria?” and create a verbatim transcription of the re-telling.  &lt;br&gt;Create a written analysis of the performance incorporating a discussion of the discourse features you studied during this course, including, but not limited to system and ritual constraints, speech acts, and cohesive devices (including deixis). Submit to the assignment tool.</td>
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<td>Assignment 7</td>
<td><strong>Peer review</strong>: Provide feedback to a peer on his or her self-assessment of ASL and English language performance in accordance with the guidelines in Witter-Merithew (2001) <em>Feedback: A Conversation About ‘The Work’ Between Learners and Colleagues</em>. Note that you are giving feedback on your peer’s written self-assessment, not on the recorded retelling itself. The feedback should be descriptive and specific; non-judgmental; and focus on the written assignment. You will review their self-analysis, patterns of success and of areas needing improvement, and their priorities for skill development.</td>
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**Total Points: 100**

Be sure you follow the guidelines in your Student Handbook throughout the course for each assignment.

- Guidelines For Use Of Technology
- Guidelines For Online Discussions
- Guidelines For Written Assignments
Course Summary

Conclusion

This course has focused on the need to understand the whole message and its linguistic, social, and cognitive contexts, in order to produce an effective, adequate interpretation. Understanding that discourse and, thus, interpreting is more than the sum of the words or signs seen and expressed is essential. As an interpreter, you must understand the impact of interpreting the message. Discourse Analysis will foster this level of understanding and enable you to determine the implication of specific Discourse Features—and, ultimately, to determine the most effective strategies for interpreting a variety of discourse events. Making informed decisions as an interpreter comes from knowledge of language, knowledge of differences between the languages with which you work, and knowledge and application of strategies intended to make your work more reliable and accurate. The study and analysis of discourse provides a foundation for the interpretation process.

Key Points

As you reflect on INTR 113: Discourse Analysis, key points to remember are:

- Discourse is systematic.
- All languages have discourse features, such as openings and closings, coherence and cohesion, and turn taking that are universal. These universal features are performed in distinct ways.
- Research on discourse in ASL is in its early stages and there is a growing body of literature on a variety of discourse topics.
- Discourse is comprised of linguistic, social, and cognitive contexts. Understanding these contexts and how they interact to make meaning is fundamental to understanding a message.
- Language users create coherent, cohesive, natural discourse in systematic ways, utilizing subtle pragmatic and prosodic features.
- Content mapping is a means of analyzing discourse.
- Discourse analysis may be used to understand a message in the source language and develop an equivalent message in the target language.
- The 10-step discourse analysis process provides concrete data upon which self-assessment may be performed.
- Discourse is the basis of the work of an interpreter.
- As interpreters, you need to be able to analyze source discourse in order to produce effective target discourse.
Next Steps

While this course is still fresh in your mind, pause to review your learning, looking through the lens of your final portfolio that is due at the end of your ASLEI journey. Consider the following:

1) Identify any applicable Entry-to-Practice Competencies that may be related to the course objectives;

2) Identify possible evidence items;

3) Identify potential reflection pieces that could be used in the narrative of the Coversheet;

4) Use your organizational system to house these items and thoughts until you are ready to work on writing future Coversheets; (Hint: If it's possible to work on all or part of a Coversheet at this time, why not draft it now?!) and finally,

5) Check in with classmates to see if some collaborative thinking might be worth your investment of time – what did others identify and how are they thinking of using the learning from this course?
Quality Instruction
Preparing Qualified Interpreters