

0:00:00.000,0:00:02.440

Image: Felicia, a Black womxn is wearing a multicolored scarf on her head, a green collared shirt and a deep red cardigan. She is wearing earrings, shiny red lipstick, a septum nose piercing and black frame glasses.

0:00:02.440,0:00:04.340

Hello. My name is Felicia Williams.

0:00:04.340,0:00:09.800

I am the co-editor of Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology, ASL version.

0:00:09.900,0:00:16.160

Raychelle Harris, the other co-editor, and I have had many long discussions about the Foreword for our book.

0:00:16.160,0:00:19.360

Who should we honor with a foreword section in our book? Who would be the best person suited for this?

0:00:19.360,0:00:27.680

Forewords are typically done in typed English; and is often a review of the publication itself, ranging from one to two pages.

0:00:27.680,0:00:32.720

Raychelle and I talked about other forewords done in sign languages. Were there any out there? Should we have one for our book? We agreed we wanted one!

0:00:32.720,0:00:38.100

The search for the best candidate to honor with the "foreword" distinction was unbelievably difficult.

0:00:38.100,0:00:42.880

We finally narrowed the list down to two people. It was impossible for us to only pick one.

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We are thrilled and honored to have Dr. MJ Bienvenu as one of the foreword authors for our book.

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Dr. Bienvenu was selected because of her extraordinary and exceptional contributions to the field of ASL.

0:00:55.740,0:01:06.260

Not only that, Dr. Bienvenu's dissertation consists of five chapters. The first three chapters were in English text.

0:01:06.260,0:01:15.660

The fourth and fifth chapter is presented solely in ASL, with no English version or translation.

0:01:15.660,0:01:20.980

The tables were turned - the systemic linguistic privilege long held by English speakers and readers were now no longer available.

0:01:20.980,0:01:32.580

The hearing dissertation committee members who did not know ASL would now need to request interpreters in order to understand Dr. Bienvenu's dissertation chapters.

0:01:32.580,0:01:40.900

Her decision to do chapters in ASL was a game-changer, and opened the door for many more opportunities for ASL in academic settings.

0:01:40.900,0:01:44.808

Especially for more academic work in ASL using digital/e-book formats.

0:01:44.808,0:01:53.708

Through Dr. Bienvenu's contributions to the field, and with great honor, MJ is considered the mother (parent) of ASL in academic settings.

0:01:53.708,0:02:05.168

Her push in putting ASL on an equal footing with English is ASL- especially the concept that ASL can be used to discuss scholarly work was eye-opening for many.

0:02:05.168,0:02:09.855

The ASL community now has more access to scholarly work through ASL, thanks to Dr. Bienvenu.

0:02:09.855,0:02:14.415

Not only that, I was a former student of Dr. Bienvenu.

0:02:14.415,0:02:19.015

Her elocution abilities were phenomenal, and her ability to analyze language compelled me to perform meta-language skills of my own ASL skills.

0:02:19.015,0:02:26.315

What is the true meaning of register? Register within language? Plus how ASL is used in academic settings to make a new claim and argument?

0:02:26.440,0:02:31.900

The opportunities Dr. Bienvenu has given us - I'm thrilled and honored Dr. Bienvenu will be sharing a few words with us.

0:02:34.088,0:02:41.088

Image: Background is dark, there are several hazy, overlapping light blue squares in the background. "Dr. MJ Bienvenu / Foreword" appears in white font, in typewriting animation.

0:02:41.088,0:02:47.108

Image: MJ is wearing a black collared shirt and black rimmed glasses. Her hair is short, black and peppered with white hair. Small stud earrings are visible. A gold ring is on MJ's left ring finger.

0:02:47.108,0:02:49.168

Raychelle and Felicia asked me to participate in this project as a foreword author. This is truly a great honor.

0:02:49.168,0:02:50.954

I will begin with a story.

0:02:51.360,0:02:58.160

In 1997, I returned to Gallaudet University as a professor in the ASL, Linguistics and Interpreting department.

0:02:58.160,0:03:02.294

My faculty position required me to obtain a doctorate (Ph.D.) degree.

0:03:02.294,0:03:07.294

It had been 17 years since I was last in school.

0:03:07.294,0:03:10.794

The first course I was enrolled in was "Introduction to Research I".

0:03:10.794,0:03:14.474

Guess who I was under? Dr. Donna Mertens

0:03:14.474,0:03:19.294

I felt immediately overwhelmed - don't get me wrong, I'm bilingual in both ASL and English.

0:03:19.294,0:03:25.034

Yet, when I was reading the materials, I understood the words, but the content - a different story - I had no idea what they were talking about.

0:03:25.034,0:03:30.134

Who supported, encouraged and pushed us to understand the research material? Dr. Mertens.

0:03:30.134,0:03:32.954

Eventually, I made it - barely. Wow.

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Eighteen years later, Dr. Mertens published a book, which was great.

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But even better, there's a digital version - I'm thrilled!

0:03:42.554,0:03:46.234

This product is ground-breaking and much needed.

0:03:47.855,0:03:53.795

For many years, we have battled to have ASL recognized as an academic language to be used in the classroom.

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Over time, people have always been resistant towards the inclusion of ASL in education - ASL can be used in the classroom!

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When studying for my masters degree, I took a course at a hearing university. I requested for an ASL interpreter.

0:04:05.615,0:04:10.075

People - both deaf and hearing- asked me why.

0:04:10.075,0:04:13.975

They said, "You're fluent in English. You can read and write. Why demean yourself by using an ASL interpreter?"

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Over thirty years later, this digital book is becoming a reality.

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This very digital book is living proof that ASL can be used to teach something equally as complex and intensive as research.

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Raychelle Harris (shows name sign which looks like CALIFORNIA with index finger contacting chin) and Felicia Williams (shows name sign, F-on opposite shoulder) are both truly pioneers in terms of this book project.

0:04:43.260,0:04:49.540

I am thrilled to see that this generation sees the humongous need for ASL in academic settings.

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This will greatly benefit many bilingual Deaf people.

0:04:54.840,0:05:05.580

Not only Deaf people, but also hearing people - hearing people who teach, hearing people who interpret, hearing people who are also our friends and colleagues.

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We can now comfortably discuss academic concepts with them in ASL.

0:05:09.040,0:05:14.040

Please understand, I am not suggesting that by simply watching the chapters in ASL, you'll immediately understand everything about research.

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Many native English speakers, reading research in their own native language, still struggle to understand research themselves.

0:05:20.240,0:05:24.440

This is equally true for ASL speakers - they may struggle at first, and will need to watch again and again, too, to better understand.

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The ultimate point being made here is that many doors are being opened by this endeavor, for the future of ASL.

0:05:30.700,0:05:40.760

I want to congratulate both co-editors, Raychelle and Felicia, and all of the chapter signers for their unquestionably hard work.

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The diversity of the chapter signers truly represent the beauty of the Deaf community and the members within.

0:05:47.280,0:05:53.460

Also, the chapter signers' ability to sign complex, dense academic information in exquisite ASL is absolutely sensational.

0:05:55.060,0:06:01.640

Reminiscing about our many years of battling - mind you, our fight is not over - yet at the same time,

0:06:01.640,0:06:08.140

Raychelle and Felicia have shown innovative ideas and strategies through their efforts, setting the standard for

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others considering ASL projects in the future

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[MJ fades from view; the geometrical blue/green squares and rectangles remain in the background]