Deaf Education in a Planetarium

Over the years we have struggled with the difficulty of giving a planetarium show to a deaf audience. This is especially true for a younger audience with limited reading abilities. You must illuminate the ASL signer which causes light splash onto the dome. You must slow the presentation down to allow for time to interpret and then point. A slower presentation can have an adverse impact on the learning of the hearing students if the presentation is made to a mixed audience. To address these issues, we are currently working on methods to improve deaf education in a planetarium environment. We will present an overview of the current project along with efforts to establish baselines comprehension levels for both deaf and hearing children. This work is partially funded by an NSF IIS-1124548 grant and funding from the Sorenson Foundation.