Beyond the Hands: Exploring Non-Manual Nuance in ASL Communication

This interactive workshop delves into the linguistic functions of American Sign Language's Non-Manual Signals (NMS), including their lexical and morphological roles. Participants will deepen their understanding of how facial expressions, head movements, and other non-manual elements shape meaning and clarity in ASL. Through guided analysis and hands-on activities, attendees will enhance both recognition and application of NMS in expressive contexts.

Educational Objectives:
By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:
• Identify key lexical Non-Manual Signals in ASL
• Discuss the morphological functions and grammatical roles of NMS
• Apply newly acquired knowledge in structured webinar-based practice activities

Linguistic Functions of Non-Manual Signals in ASL

Lexical & Grammatical Functionality

1. **Lexical Non-Manual Behaviors** – Visual cues that are inherent to specific vocabulary
2. **Non-Manual Adverbs** – Modify verbs to show intensity, frequency, manner
3. **Adjectives** – Express qualities visually (e.g., raised eyebrows for "very tall")
4. **Non-Manual Grammatical Markers** – Include negation, question forms, conditionals
5. **Grammatical "Sound" Markers** – Non-vocal elements that mark phonological features visually

Prosody & Structure

6. **Prosodic Structure** – Rhythm, intonation, pauses, and emphasis conveyed through NMS
7. **Discourse Structure** – Signals topic shifts, transitions, or narrative flow
8. **Turn-Taking** – Facial expressions and shifts to signal speaker changes or engagement

Cognitive & Social Expression

9. **Emotional States / Evaluative Judgments** – Convey feelings, attitudes, judgments visually
10. **Backchannel Feedback** – Non-verbal responses to show listening, agreement, confusion
11. **Mouth Movements** – Include mouthing, grammatical markers, or lexical components
12. **Silent ASL** – Communication entirely through NMS and body movement, without manual signs

Interested in Booking Trix Bruce's Presentations? Reach out at info@trixbruce.com