Enhancing The Writing Skills of Deaf Students

Sybil R. Ishman, PhD
Teacher Education Institute
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Overview

• Writing in the target academic language is often a frustrating and intimidating task for many Deaf students.

• Low performance in the “input” area of reading is often mirrored in the “output” domain of writing.

• Fluency is sign communication does not ensure fluency in a written modality.

• Level of access and mode of language fluency from parents at an early age can be a factor.

• Cultural barriers
Considerations for Course Development

• Assess entry language skills
  heterogeneous aspect of social, personal and academic backgrounds

• Determine exit criteria of each level of target language instruction

• Consider the need for student motivation
Considerations (continued)

• Consider Instructional Needs of Students:
  - understanding the assignment
  - learning and choosing invention strategies
  - safe environment to experiment with ideas
  - understanding the recursive nature of writing
Considerations (continued)

- Consider students’ need for varying levels of feedback
  
  holistic summary feedback
  
  concepts, logic, rhetorical mode(s), audience, thesis, paragraph level concerns

  electronic (Word Insert) feedback
  
  vocabulary, organization, sentence structure concerns, interfering grammar, support/development of ideas

  one-on-one feedback
  
  more detailed grammar, sentence structure, cohesiveness, coherence, editorial concerns
The Process of Writing
Writing is a Process of Discovering What You Want to Say

- Demonstrate the recursive nature of writing
- Admit/accept that writing is hard work

- Pre-writing
  - list thoughts
  - organize thoughts
  - develop and expand thoughts
  - establish focus and purpose
  - consider audience
Writing Process (continued)

- First Draft
  transformation of pre-writing
  introduction, body, conclusion/summary
  sentence transitions

- Second Draft
  clarity of thought
  expansion
  transpositions
  sentence/paragraph transitions
  word choice
Writing Process (continued)

• Third Draft
  sentence variety
  grammar
  surface mechanics
  proofreading/editing

• Final Copy
Recommended Categories of Instruction

- Isolated and blended rhetorical modes
- Topic, Purpose, Audience
- Thesis
- Organization
- Development of thought
- Support for ideas
- Clarity
- Coherence
Categories of Information (continued)

- Importance of drafting
- Importance of editing
- Importance of proofreading
Evaluation Criteria

- Provide listing of standards and grading criteria
- Provide grading rubric
- Provide samples/models of good writing
- Discuss/Analyze with class what makes these models of writing good examples
21st Century Writing Competencies

- Ability to —
  - determine information needed
  - determine appropriate research mediums
  - critically review information retrieved: analyze and evaluate
Writing Competencies (continued)

• Ability to -
  • synthesize information
  • understand the perspectives of others
  • appeal to appropriate audiences
  • apply information learned across academic disciplines and to future careers
Future Directions

- “Through enhanced composing opportunities, our students can become the citizen writers of the world and future”
  Kathleen Blake Yancey, NCTE Past President
- Call to develop writing curricular that support all forms of 21st century literacies inside and outside of school
- Call to move beyond a pyramid-like sequential model of literary development
- Call to acknowledge multiple models of composing operating simultaneously