

Enhancing The Writing Skills of Deaf Students

Sybil R. Ishman, PhD
Teacher Education Institute
May 31-June 23, 2010

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 in 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

