

Teaching Critical Reading Skills To Deaf Students

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

Goals

- To discuss and evaluate best practices for improving reading skills of young Deaf adults for their future success.
- To discuss the use of summary as a tool to enhance critical reading and its transfer across academic disciplines.

Literacy



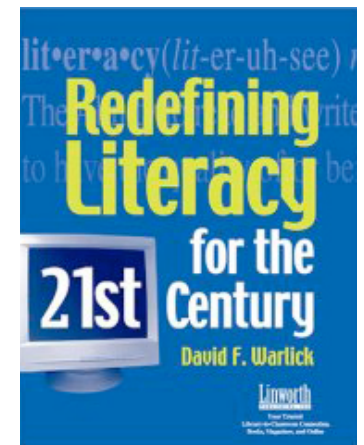
Current research being conducted with Deaf students focuses on [language] literacy as “an essential skill for success in college, particularly critical reading skills” (Cuculick & Kelly, 2003).

The concept of what defines sufficient literacy has shifted for both hearing and Deaf students due to the “information age”. We now face the challenge of providing literacy access to all students, with respect to varying levels of need, personal goals and ability, to gain the educational opportunities to which they are entitled (Nickerson & Ishman, 2010).

Currently literacy is about conceiving ideas, synthesizing, and explaining complex ideas well and easily (Kylene Beers, President of the National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

“Our job, as educators, is to prepare our students for their futures. This job today is especially challenging, because, for the first time in history, we cannot clearly describe the future for which we are preparing our children.”

David Warlick
*Redefining Literacy
for the 21st Century*



The Problem

- Inability of many Deaf students to read critically in their writing courses
- Inability of students to apply information from their reading to their writing assignments or to other disciplines

What Can Teachers Do To Improve Reading In The Target Language?

- Teach students *HOW* to read critically
- Require that students use critical reading strategies in all reading/homework assignments
- Model strong vs. weak examples of critical reading
- Stress the importance of annotation
- Foster application of knowledge learned

What Is Critical Reading?

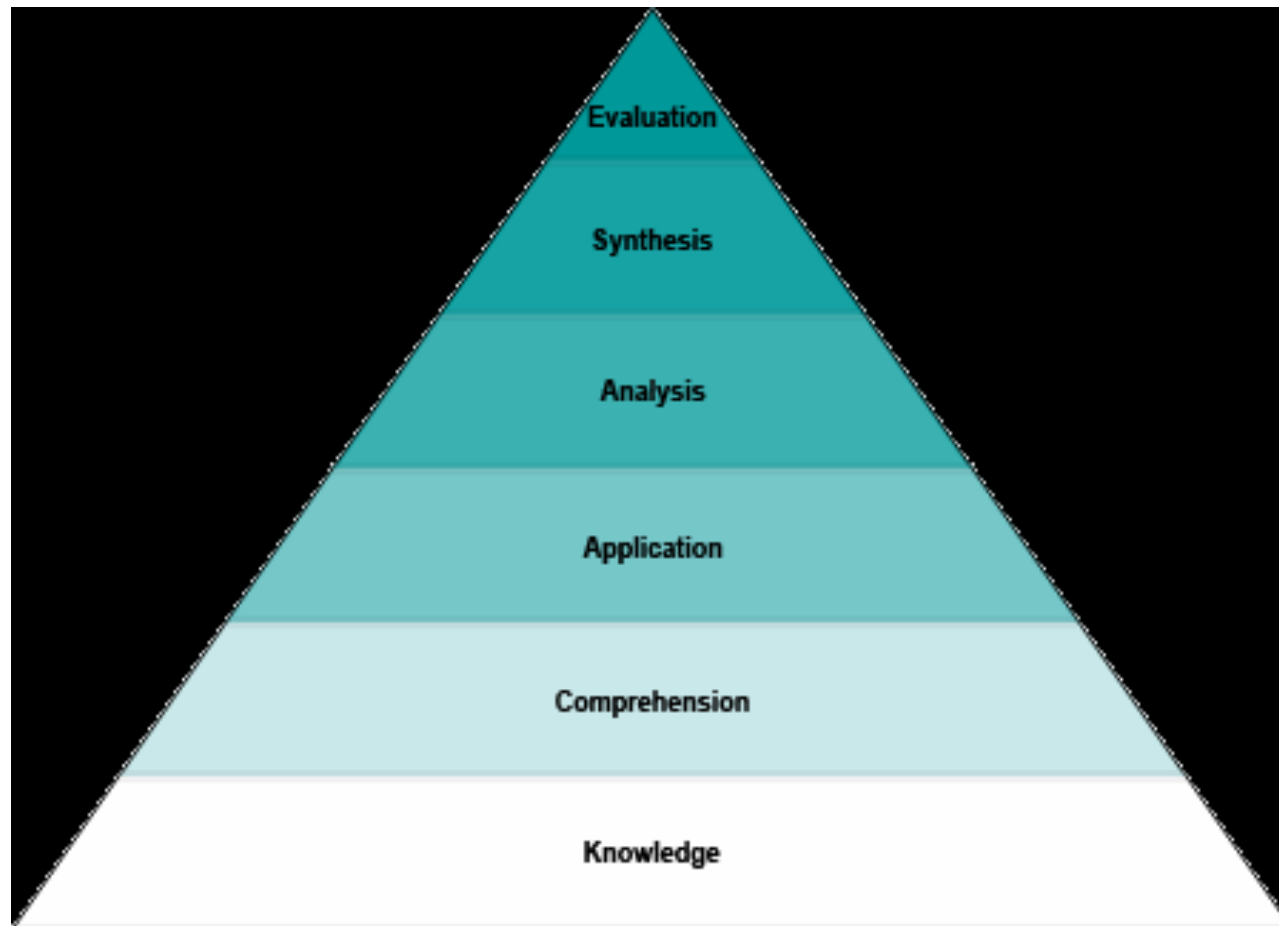
- Critical reading is more than just understanding text. It is working to figure out and interact with the many layers of ideas and language in an academic text. It also involves questioning the authority of a text. The end result is the analysis of what an author said, how he expressed it, why he expressed it, and the future application of the text to past and future learning.

Critical Reading

Students need to focus on metacognitive strategies that will enable them to become critical readers and thinkers.



Critical Reading Goals of Teachers



Bloom's Taxonomy of learning. Adapted from: Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956)
Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals.
Handbook I, cognitive domain. New York ; Toronto: Longmans, Green.

Reading Skills of Most Non-Native Language Users

- Skills at the knowledge level:
 - recall of specifics
 - memorization of facts and knowledge of basic principles
- Skills with basic comprehension tasks:
 - Explain a graph
 - Give an example, comparing, tracing steps or showing causes



Rationals for Weakness:

- Language barriers
- Prior knowledge barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Critical thinking barriers

Areas students need to focus on

- Application of concepts in new ways
- Use of abstractions
- Analysis of logic and technique
- Synthesis where they weave information together
- Evaluation where they express objective or subjective opinion supported by fact
- Ability to interpret texts in relation to what they already know about the subject

Moving from non-critical readers...

- who memorize the information found in texts
- have difficulty taking the “what” of the information and expanding it to “how” it applies
- think that the text represents “the truth, the whole truth” but nothing more

○

Kurland (1995)



...to critical readers who ...

- are active rather than passive
- know what they don't know, what they need to know, and where to find the unknowns to better understand the text
- ask higher level questions
- synthesize and evaluate



Critical Readers:

- Look at what the text says and analyze the content, language and structure.
- Make judgments about the validity of context

Krashen's theory of language stipulates:

“Learning of a language comes through interaction with input from that language and its users in many information–getting situations”

Kurland's theory about non critical readers:

- They gain knowledge and facts mostly by memorizing the information found in the text book
- They do not take the “what” of the information and expand it to the “how” it applies
- They think that the text is “ the truth, the whole truth but nothing more than the truth”

Critical Reading Objectives

- Stay mentally active during academic reading
- Take ownership of ideas in reading material
 - identify essential ideas in sentences
 - find embedded ideas in texts
 - restate authors' main points originally
 - reflect/relate to past knowledge
 - analyze/apply new knowledge



Critical Reading Strategies

- Preparing to Read
- Previewing and Skimming
- Reading and Re-reading
- Annotating
- Analyzing



Critical Reading Steps For Students

- Preparing to Read

 - Ask self what are instructor's expectations for the assignment

 - Investigate the author

 - Determine the intended audience

 - Have dictionary and pen at hand

- Previewing and Skimming

 - Study the title

 - Read quickly first and last paragraphs

 - Look for relationships among headings and subheadings, if any

 - Skip around In the text

Critical Reading steps (continued)

- Reading and Rereading

 - Find the thesis statement and topic sentences

 - Determine general ideas from specific ideas

 - Determine the organization of the text (i.e. rhetorical modes)

- Annotating

 - Mark up the text using symbols and recall words

- Analyzing/Reflecting

 - Think about the impact of the text on self, social/cultural values, other disciplines

Using Summary As A Method To Enhance Critical Reading

- Summary writing as a critical reading tool encourages –
 - internal encoding in that it can reveal levels of text comprehension
 - external decoding and removes dependency on the language of the author to express points
 - enhances fund of knowledge and perspectives of others



Traditional pedagogy of summary writing:

- Finding the main point in each paragraph
- Putting all the main points together to make a summary

Non-traditional pedagogy of summary writing:

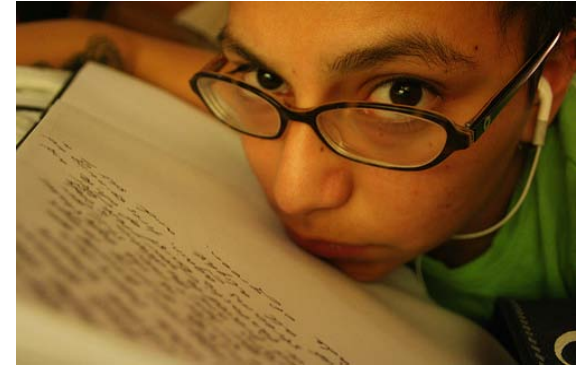
- Using mind mapping
- Using student/peer generated pre-summaries
- Formulating formal summaries based on teacher-provided outline structure

Providing Positive Reading Experiences

- Strive to provide interesting, challenging, and creative assignments related to reading experiences.
- Help students dive into reading to broaden their experiences.
- Assign a range of topics related to student interests.



Reading Journals



- Examples are listed that support facts.
- Students are encouraged to hypothesize about the sequence of events as they read.
- Students are encouraged to list questions and make generalizations.
- Students are encouraged to synthesize, make implications, compare/contrast and evaluate material read.