

Skill Development Activity: IMPROVING SEMANTIC AWARENESS / VOCABULARY

Activities:

- Engage in text analysis activities of ASL and English texts where you isolate concepts that present a unique challenge for the interpretation process. Consider the meaning of the concept in context and write down a list of all of the possible signs or synonyms for the concept. You may find a dictionary, thesaurus, and a good sign language dictionary useful in this process. Practice interpreting the text inserting the various possibilities from your list and evaluate each in terms of its effectiveness in conveying the meaning and intent of the original text. If you are unsure what the sign or word means, record it in a journal and seek input from interpreting colleagues or a Deaf mentor. As you become aware of possible ways in which the concept could be conveyed, record them in the journal for periodic review and discussion.
- Maintain a journal that you can use to record challenging concepts and vocabulary as it arises in your day to day interpreting work. Later, use the journal as the foundation for a study group with other interpreters (who are also maintaining a journal). The study group can explore how the concept would be conveyed differently in a variety of contexts.
- Crossword puzzles in the daily newspaper and the vocabulary building in the *Reader's Digest* are simple, yet effective ways to continue building your English vocabulary.

Resources

Free Online Materials

ASL Storytime from the Department of Sign Language and Interpretation at Gallaudet University

- This series includes three volumes, each containing stories with a broad variety of ASL features.
- Available on YouTube.
 - Volume 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLxddLdxbOw>
 - Volume 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAGx5CXgmTU>
 - Volume 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqx4wCZoCMU>

NOTE: These stories are good for practice of many ASL features so use them with other instructional sheets in addition to this one!

Expansion Techniques by Shelley Lawrence (<https://www.cit-asl.org/new/1994-cit-conference-proceedings-download-pdf/>)

- This article, in the proceedings of the 1994 National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers edited by Elizabeth Winston, details seven strategies used in ASL to elaborate ideas.

TerpTalks from the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC)

- This series includes diverse ASL and English texts available for practice interpreting.
- There is no charge for accessing these materials, although you may be required to register to access.

- Available on NCIEC's website: <http://www.interpretereducation.org/tim/terptalks/browse/>

Purchasable Materials

The following resources may be available for use from your local interpreter education program or through your public library. If the library does not have them, request that they purchase them for community use.

Interpreter Practice Materials from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

- Set of 33 DVDs includes 12 simultaneous texts, 12 consecutive texts, 7 one-to-one situations, 2 small groups, 6 ASL texts and 6 English texts.
- Excellent for individual, study group, or classroom skill development exercises.

Semantic Awareness Test Kit from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

- This kit helps viewers to understand multiple-meaning English words and the corresponding ASL sign. They are based on selected contextual meanings of English words that have more than one meaning and the ASL signs that most accurately convey those meanings.
- The kit consists of 3 ASL multiple choice stimulus videotapes, 3 English multiple-choice stimulus videotapes, 1 practice videotape, and an administrator's manual which contains directions, reproducible test forms, and instructor answer keys.