Skill Development Activity:
TEXT ANALYSIS EXERCISES OF NON-LEGAL TEXTS

You can use any ASL or English text to focus on analyzing the following aspects of the text. This multi-step process is based on a fairly standard approach to discourse analysis in interpreter training programs. Some of the steps have been modified, and others have been added.

Text Analysis Steps:

1. Think about the topic of the text - prior to viewing it entirely - and create a random list of all the pieces of information you already know about the topic.

    This will help you to access your long-term memory and your world-knowledge base.

2. View the text as many times as necessary until you feel comfortable that you understand it.

3. Jot down a random list of all the concepts from the text that you can recall.

    Compare the prediction list and the content list to see how much of your world knowledge was actually addressed in the text.

4. Create a mapping (a visual representation) of the text, followed by a brief outline.

    The key with both the mapping and the outline is to look for key concepts and words/symbols to help you remember what is being discussed.

5. Retell the text in your own words - using the same language as was used on the tape.

    If the text originated in English - retell it in English. If it originated in ASL- retell it in ASL.

    Change your retelling process by changing your "audience." Consider how the retelling would differ if you were conveying the text to children, to senior citizens, to a group of professionals, to a classroom of students in a college setting, to your boss, to your family members or best friend.

    Consider how the content would change depending on the context (the circumstances surrounding an act or event, the setting in which a specific discourse occurs).

6. Create a list of linguistic considerations you want to focus on when you interpret the text into the target language.

    This step requires you to adjust your thinking about the text from the original language to a different language. So, if you were to tell a English text in ASL, what linguistic features would you need to incorporate? If you were to shift from ASL to English, what linguistic features would you need to consider?

7. Consider the information within the text that is culturally bound.

This refers to those pieces of information that most people would not understand unless they were a member of the culture. For example, non-deaf people do not appreciate the importance of the deaf identity or the schools for the deaf as part of the deaf identity. Consequently, when deaf people talk about their experiences, they are not received with the same intent as deaf people receive them. So, work with the text and identify what concepts come up that would require cultural insight to appreciate. Then, consider how you would talk about the concepts in the target language.

8. Retell the text in the target language.

This means to tell the text in the language other than it originated in. You can adjust the content again by changing the setting/audience to whom you are telling the text. This is good practice for adapting meaning to the needs of the audience and for considering different registers (levels of formality) in the way you use language.

Practice until you feel comfortable with your retelling in the target language.

9. Practice interpreting the text simultaneously.

If possible, tape yourself interpreting the text and then create a transcription of the work. Compare the information in your transcription with the original text to determine your overall effectiveness in conveying an equivalent message. Repeat the taping and transcription process as often as you would like - again, changing the audience to whom you are interpreting.

10. Repeat the steps with as many texts as possible - both those that originate in English and those that originate in ASL.

Broadening your analysis of a broad variety of texts, considering how information is organized and the factors that influence meaning in the text, will enhance your world-knowledge and your general analytical skills.

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!

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.