

**Skill Development Activity:
IMPROVING SPATIAL STRUCTURING
Classifier Use - ASL Texts**

Classifiers fall into a variety of classes. According to the Signing Naturally (2014) curriculum, published by Dawn Sign Press, there are eight.

1. Semantic Classifier

Semantic classifiers are proforms that function as "pronoun" that replaces a noun (or as noun and verb combined). Some examples of semantic classifiers are: cl-1 (e.g. a person), cl-2 (e.g. two persons), classifiers are: cl

7. Body Part Classifier

Body part classifier is a symbol that refers to a part of the body beyond the frame of the signing area -- e.g. legs, back, feet, etc. For example, you utter the ASL word #foot and then use its classifier (e.g. the passive hand) to represent the foot. Or, you would use an CL-S handshape to represent a head shaking no. Or, you would use the CL-index finger of both hands, crossed, to represent legs crossed.

8. Plural Classifier

Plural classifier is a plural symbol of a noun or subject. Some examples are a) CL-open-hand,

warrants, until you have an ASL to English interpretation that you feel is a good illustration of the meaning of the text and incorporates the English wording that conveys the information in a dynamic and descriptive manner.

You can take the process one step further by having someone who is unfamiliar with the original text to back-translate the English interpretation into ASL and then compare that translation to the original text. This will help you to gauge how effective you were in preserving the semantic intent of the original ASL text.

Exercise B: You will repeat the analysis process with additional ASL texts that you will translate into English. Here are the steps you will apply, followed by a series of short, but robust ASL texts for you to work with.

Step 1. Analyze the ASL text to determine how classifiers were used as part of creating a real-world visual-spatial orientation.

Step 2. Isolate and identify the classifiers and classifier constructs that exist within the text. What does each mean within the text? Identify the class of classifiers that were used - it is common to use multiple classes within a text.

Step 3. How would the same information be communicated in spoken English? Complete a translation of each of the classifiers and classifier constructs from the text.

Step 4. Now, generate an ASL to spoken English interpretation of the text in its entirety, giving particular attention to how you convey the ASL classifiers to create a dynamic equivalency in spoken English.

Step

1.

Repeat this step as often as necessary until you are comfortable integrating the classifier information in concise and descriptive English.

If possible, record yourself interpreting the text, and ask someone to listen to the quality of your descriptions and provide you with feedback.

Re-do based on the feedback.

Exercise D: Journal

Maintain a journal of ASL classifiers that you observe occurring in ASL narratives and conversations, as part of your interactions with the Deaf Community. Practice choosing English representations for the entries and discussing them with a colleague to expand the possible options you could use.

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.

<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.

ABC Stories from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

Edgar Allan Poe Chilling Tales from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

