

English Outreach and Technical Assistance

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Abstract

DeKalb College is providing outreach and technical assistance to business, government, and academic communities in reading and writing for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. DeKalb College instructors also provide English instruction off campus in the community to employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In addition, support technical assistance is provided to hearing managers and supervisors regarding the unique English difficulties that employees with a hearing loss may experience on their jobs. A postsecondary focus regarding English curriculum content is being shared with schools and teachers as well. DeKalb College appreciates the opportunity to share successes and concerns regarding English outreach and technical assistance projects with administrators, VR counselors and teachers.

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English Outreach and Technical Assistance

DeKalb College has offered COMM-095, a reading and writing course to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing for nine years. This course had evolved as a reasonable accommodation and is available to any student with a hearing loss on any instructional level. The course addresses the unique reading and writing difficulties that students may experience because of a hearing loss. This college course has also been the model for outreach and technical assistance projects in the community. This article discusses (1) the English instructional and support outreach and technical assistance activities that DeKalb College is currently planning and implementing; (2) DeKalb College's content focus regarding English outreach and technical assistance and how this focus has evolved; and (3) successes and concerns regarding the planning and implementation of English outreach and technical assistance.

English Instruction and Support

We addressed two kinds of English outreach and technical assistance. Instructional technical assistance is provided to employees and future employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Support technical assistance is provided to hearing managers, supervisors, and co-workers regarding the unique English difficulties that employees with a hearing loss may experience.

English outreach and technical assistance was initiated four years ago in a pilot program with the Internal Revenue Service. Theresa Johnson, former director of the Center for Disability Services at DeKalb College, invited employers in the community to serve on the advisory board. Since the Southeast Branch of the IRS employs a significant number of employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Atlanta area, Joe Chiaramida, a chief within the branch, became a member of the advisory board. Mr. Chiaramida had considered employees who were Deaf to be among the most dedicated,

¹ DeKalb College, recently re-named Georgia Perimeter College, is an affiliate of the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC).

but he had concerns. For example, many employees who were Deaf seemed reluctant to seek promotions and changes in their employment within the IRS. He observed the English course for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing at DeKalb College. Mr. Chiaramida and Ms. Johnson discussed how such an English course might increase the confidence of these IRS employees as well as their skills. In the spring of 1994, Kemira Denlea, one of the English instructors to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing at DeKalb College, began the pilot program of English instruction off campus at the Southeast Branch of the Internal Revenue Service. Regular classes took place twice a week and lasted for thirty weeks. In the fall of 1994, Katherine Bruni started a second class. Eventually, Ms. Denlea relocated, and the program format changed and continued with one instructor. The regular basic English training now runs for twenty weeks in the fall and winter of each year. In the spring of 1997, mini-courses were first offered to employees who were Deaf and Hard of Hearing and had already taken the basic training. Mini-courses are now offered to all employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing regardless of whether or not they have taken the basic English training. For example, Deaf employees who were not interested in a twenty-week training program expressed a desire to improve their skills in the completion of IRS employment forms, in the understanding of evaluation materials, desk procedures, memos, and manuals.

Individualized instruction in the workplace has also been an option for technical assistance at the IRS. Sometimes it is helpful for the instructor to see English as it “comes over the desk,” since it is sometimes difficult to make English relevant to an employee’s job in a classroom setting. Communication about a job in American Sign Language may not afford the instructor an opportunity to discuss specific English vocabulary that is accurate to the task and culture of a workplace. This individualized training is currently being implemented in a new outreach project at the Department of Education in Atlanta.

Whether English instruction is individualized in the workplace or takes place on campus, the organization of materials is very important. Frequently, students and employees who are Deaf lack the schema in English to retrieve information that is needed to effect change in their reading and writing skills. They may learn information but not have enough practice as adults to acquire the necessary skills. A notebook strategy has been effective in the classroom at DeKalb College, as well as in the technical assistance instruction in the community; students compile information that is frequently in the form of charts in a well-organized notebook. Employees and students practice finding information in their notebooks that will assist them in reading comprehension and writing. This strategy is particularly helpful to employees because they can use their notebooks, or frequently needed pages from the notebook, to assist them at any moment while at work. Examples of a few of the charts used by students are included in this paper. For example, the *If/Unless Conditional Clauses with Commands Chart* (Appendix A) has been helpful to tax examiners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in understanding procedure and code manuals that they need on their jobs.

English instruction as technical assistance also takes place on DeKalb College’s campus through the Continuing Education department. The Continuing Education department has provided the flexibility needed to meet the changing needs of the community. As the requirements for high school graduation and entry into college are raised, many of the students in Georgia who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are receiving certificates of completion rather than high school diplomas. These students can enroll in COMM-095, the reading and writing course for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing through the Continuing Education department. The Continuing Education path also provides VR counselors and their clients an opportunity to continue training even though a college degree may not be in the Individualized Work and Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). The Continuing Education department has, therefore, augmented transition programs into the workplace.

Support English outreach and technical assistance is also provided to agencies, businesses, and organizations as well as to employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. At the IRS, for example, meetings with managers take place at least one time during every twenty-week basic English training session. Contacts are also maintained with managers and supervisors through periodic telephone calls and e-mail.

Maintaining contacts with hearing people in the workplace as part of support technical assistance is important because most hearing people do not understand what a hearing loss has to do with reading and writing skills. Compliance with current legislation and the provision of reasonable accommodations is made much more efficient when education is provided about deafness and its possible impact on reading and writing skills. *How Good Is Your Chinese?* (Appendix B) is one handout that has proven effective in explaining the reading and writing difficulties of many, but not all, Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and employees. When hearing supervisors and managers try to memorize Chinese characters without hearing the language, they begin to understand how difficult it is to visually memorize what appears to us as “chicken scratch.” To the student or employee who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, English looks like “chicken scratch;” this activity helps hearing people understand how difficult it is to visually memorize English without the benefit of sound. While reading and writing difficulties are common among people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, it is important to point out that there are people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing who have no apparent reading and writing difficulties; reading and writing skills vary among individuals. Two common topics for discussion in English support technical are (a) understanding second language acquisition for employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and (b) reading and writing concerns in the workplace for employees who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. An example of a possible agenda for an English support technical assistance meeting can be found in this paper, *Agenda Chart* (Appendix C).

Topics for discussion in English support outreach and technical assistance are also important to discuss in instructional English technical assistance. Many times Deaf and Hard of Hearing employees are more motivated to learn English, more inclined to respect their own language capabilities, and more likely to increase their self-confidence if they understand why they are having difficulties in reading and writing. More often than not, students and employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing have never had the opportunity to learn about second language acquisition and why they experience difficulties in printed English.

Support technical assistance in English provides many opportunities for technical assistance in other areas such as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, working with interpreters, and using communication technology. The person providing English support outreach and technical assistance should be prepared to take advantage of these opportunities.

Teacher training is another area of support outreach and technical assistance. Ongoing teacher training is taking place once a month at the Georgia School for the Deaf and once a week at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf. Presentations at conferences and meetings and consultations are also part of DeKalb College’s outreach activities. The opportunities that are available for ongoing technical assistance, however, seem to be the most gratifying and the best opportunities to effect change.

Speaking with individual faculty members and to faculty and staff in various departments on DeKalb’s campus is a priority when planning outreach and technical assistance activities. One-on-one casual contacts seem to be more effective on campus than required meetings or training sessions. The instructor of a mainstreamed student who is receiving tutoring from the Center for Disability Services always receives technical assistance through an informal telephone call. It is, of course, always beneficial to the student for the mainstream course instructor and the tutor to function as a team in assisting the student; this is an effective approach in providing technical assistance to faculty. When department meetings are the format for technical assistance, however, some controversial topics, such as the use of editors for freshmen students’ papers, may surface. These topics need to be addressed with every respect for academic and departmental policy. The person providing the technical assistance often needs to suggest criteria that may be considered by the department in the solution of a problem; technical assistance may influence policy, or it may not, but it does not establish policy. The *Editor Referral Criteria Chart* (Appendix D) is one handout that may help illustrate an appropriate role taken in English technical assistance provided to the English Department at DeKalb College. The *Discussion Topics Chart* (Appendix E) is another handout that suggests possible

topics for discussion at a campus technical assistance meeting.

Content Focus for English Outreach and Technical Assistance

The content focus for English outreach and technical assistance at DeKalb College is the unique second language structure and vocabulary problems that are experienced by many students and employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This focus has evolved from COMM-095 offered at DeKalb College. The *DeKalb College Flow Chart of English Courses* (Appendix F) shows how COMM-095 fits into the curriculum. COMM-095 is offered to students on any instructional level. Some students may be advised to take COMM-095 before entering the mainstreamed developmental studies courses, but they do not have to take this advice. Students may also enroll in developmental studies or upper level courses and COMM-095 concurrently. COMM-095 is offered as a reasonable accommodation.

Deaf students attend developmental studies courses with full support services from the Center for Disability Services, and they report satisfaction with many aspects of the reading and writing curriculum. The Developmental Studies department is very concerned with instruction in critical thinking, pre-reading activities, and writing development. Instructor comments on students' papers, error logs, and students' feedback from mainstreamed courses indicate that unique structure and vocabulary problems are not addressed for students who are Deaf in the mainstreamed courses. COMM-095 is needed to address this missing piece of the reading and writing curriculum for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The structure and vocabulary aspects of a total reading and writing curriculum are only some of the layers of a comprehensive language curriculum, but they are very important layers that are frequently not addressed appropriately from a second language perspective. The *Curriculum Content Chart #1* (Appendix G) represents some of the content for instruction in the structure and vocabulary layers of a comprehensive curriculum.

The perspective that was gained from DeKalb College's experiences with the COMM-095 course framed the focus for English outreach and technical assistance in the community. Employees' and employers' feedback indicated that there was a need to "address the Chinese" – the English structure and vocabulary problems – that were preventing employees from understanding specific sentences, for example, in their job procedures. These employees needed to write short coherent messages and memos to their supervisors; they did not need to write essays. Furthermore, discussions with teachers of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing indicated that many teachers have not received training in second language instruction; English grammar is often addressed as it is with hearing children. Teachers complained that their instruction and methods seemed ineffective and inadequate to meet the needs of their students. Yet many of these teachers implemented excellent activities that addressed many of the other layers of a comprehensive language and reading and writing curriculum; these teachers did not need general training. Technical assistance needed a specific focus, and once again it seemed that there was a need for support in the areas of structure and vocabulary taught as a second language and adapted to the needs of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

A few of the structure and vocabulary charts that may be used in instructional technical assistance with students and employees and in support technical assistance, specifically with teachers, are included in this paper. The *Five Basic Verb Patterns Chart* (Appendix H) assists students and employees in writing sentences when the meaning requires two verbs. The *S.A. Chart #1* (Appendix I) helps students and employees remember important semantic information about past actions. The *S.A. Chart #2* (Appendix J) provides information to students and employees about using the words before and after to write about first and second actions. The *Modal Chart #1* (Appendix K) compares the meanings of modals, primarily for reading comprehension. The *Four Principles of Expressive Vocabulary Chart* (Appendix L) gives students and employees four guidelines to remember when choosing words in their written expression. The *Two Word Idioms Chart* (Appendix M) provides students with four additional guidelines to remember when writing two word idioms.

Postsecondary administrators who are considering implementing English outreach and technical assistance should

determine their focus for support and instruction. A focus on structure and vocabulary may not meet the needs of the populations served by every program. The focus of instruction in the areas of structure and vocabulary at DeKalb College was largely determined by recognizing the need to supplement the curriculum in developmental studies English courses. (The *DeKalb College Flow Chart of English Courses* is diagrammed in Appendix F). This experience helped meet English needs in the community. Administrators should recognize the need to supplement English curriculum according to the instruction provided in existing mainstreamed reading and writing courses. This effort is the basis for providing a sound English outreach and technical assistance program in the community.

Successes and Concerns

DeKalb College has documented the success of its English outreach and technical assistance program, but we want to do a better job of planning and implementing in the future. We recognized the importance of including support technical assistance as a part of our instructional program; we helped employees understand why they have difficulties with reading and writing. Informal feedback from employees and employers indicated that self-esteem and confidence were increased through English training. On occasion, however, we failed to recognize English needs in the community as technical assistance opportunities. When approached by a local business, for example, we introduced the employee and his manager to the COMM-095 class at DeKalb College. We should have taken the opportunity to provide instructional technical assistance to the employee and support technical assistance to management. The employee was not a good match for the class because he already had a college degree; we missed an opportunity for outreach.

In providing outreach and technical assistance in the community, it is always important to respect organizational culture, morale, time constraints, deadlines, stresses and demands. Early in our planning, we identified the importance of flexibility in addressing the particular needs and constraints of the businesses and organizations with whom we worked. As a key to success, moreover, the importance of establishing rapport with businesses and organizations cannot be overemphasized.

English outreach and technical assistance also provides many opportunities for technical assistance in other areas such as working with interpreters, using communication technology, and complying with legislation. We have taken advantage of these opportunities, but we have not always seized opportunities to communicate or market our English outreach and technical assistance activities. We need to create more opportunities to offer ourselves as a resource, for example, to public school mainstream programs for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and to teacher training programs at colleges and universities.

Employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing have been involved in the planning process for English technical assistance off campus; it is important that employees participate in setting goals for both instructional and support activities. On campus, however, we hope to involve faculty and staff more effectively so that we can better respect the special considerations of providing in-house support outreach and technical assistance.

English outreach and technical assistance is implemented at DeKalb College by the instructor of the COMM-095 course; this is a part-time position. Therefore, setting clear, achievable priorities for outreach and technical assistance is vital, due to the time and scheduling constraints of a part-time position, in order to effect significant change.

A review of DeKalb College's varied English outreach and technical assistance activities, the content focus of those activities, and our successes and concerns may assist in planning and implementing English outreach and technical assistance programs.

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Author note:

I would like to thank Theresa Johnson, former director of The Center for Disability Services at DeKalb College, for her hard work, creative spirit and administrative skills in setting the framework for the pilot program of outreach and technical assistance to the Southeast Regional Branch of the Internal Revenue Service. Joe Chiamida, a chief with the Internal Revenue Service and member of the DeKalb College Center for Disability Services Advisory Board, worked with Theresa to start the pilot program of English outreach and technical assistance. Kemira Denlea, former DeKalb College instructor, instructed the first English outreach and technical assistance class at the IRS with six employees in the spring of 1994. Many thanks to Theresa, Joe, Kemira, and the employees for their innovation and many hours of hard work.

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Appendix A

If/Then Conditional Clauses with Commands Chart
(Reception Only)

If -----, verb

yes ----- yes
no ----- no

Unless -----, verb

no ----- yes
yes ----- no

Example:

If your hair is red, walk to the door.

Is your hair red? Do you walk to the door?
yes ----- yes
no ----- no

Example:

Unless your hair is red, walk to the door.

Is your hair red? Do you walk to the door?
yes ----- no
no ----- yes

Appendix B

How Good is Your Chinese?

大	big
女	woman
小	small
心	heart
戶	family
止	stop
考	hair
我不能決定	I cannot decide.
我聽不見	I cannot hear you.
你幾歲?	How old are you?
你名叫甚麼?	What is your name?
現在幾點鐘?	What time is it?
每晚	every night
夜校	night school
夜間	in the night
今晚	tonight
明晚	tomorrow night
昨晚	last night

Appendix C

Agenda

- I. Understanding Second Language Acquisition for Employees who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - A. How Good is Your Chinese?
 - B. Hearing vs. Deaf Acquisition of English
 - 1. Learning vs. Acquisition
 - 2. Bombardment (visual vs. auditory)
 - 3. “Dialect” Considerations
 - C. The Tissue Paper Analogy

- II. Reading and Writing Concerns in the Work Place for Employees who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - A. Reading and Writing Classes as an Accommodation
 - B. Reading and Writing Relative to Work Functions and Tasks
 - C. Communication Between Managers, Employees, and Instructors – A Team Effort
 - D. Employee Selection and Placement/Dialect Considerations/Importance of Reading and Writing Skills to Individual Jobs
 - E. The Hard of Hearing Employee
 - F. Recruitment and Retention
 - G. A Flexible Course Format

Editor Referral Criteria

The paper must . . .

Demonstrate an accuracy of expression and reasonable control of English.

Demonstrate some evidence of being idiomatic, even though it does not show idiomatic fluency.

Demonstrate a control of English that is sufficient to maintain a general point of view.

Demonstrate good overall control of the student's limited English resources.

Demonstrate logical organization and development of an idea.

Communicate its message without calling undue attention to itself.

Develop a clear, central topic.

The reader must . .

Understand with almost 100% certainty what the student has written.

Be confident that the student's words say what the student intended.

The focus of the paper must be on meaning.

Sentences should be clear, even though they may be overly simple.

The lapses in grammar that occur, should often pass unnoticed.

Many of these ideas have been stated or suggested in Gallaudet University's "General Description of the English Language Program," 1989.

Appendix E

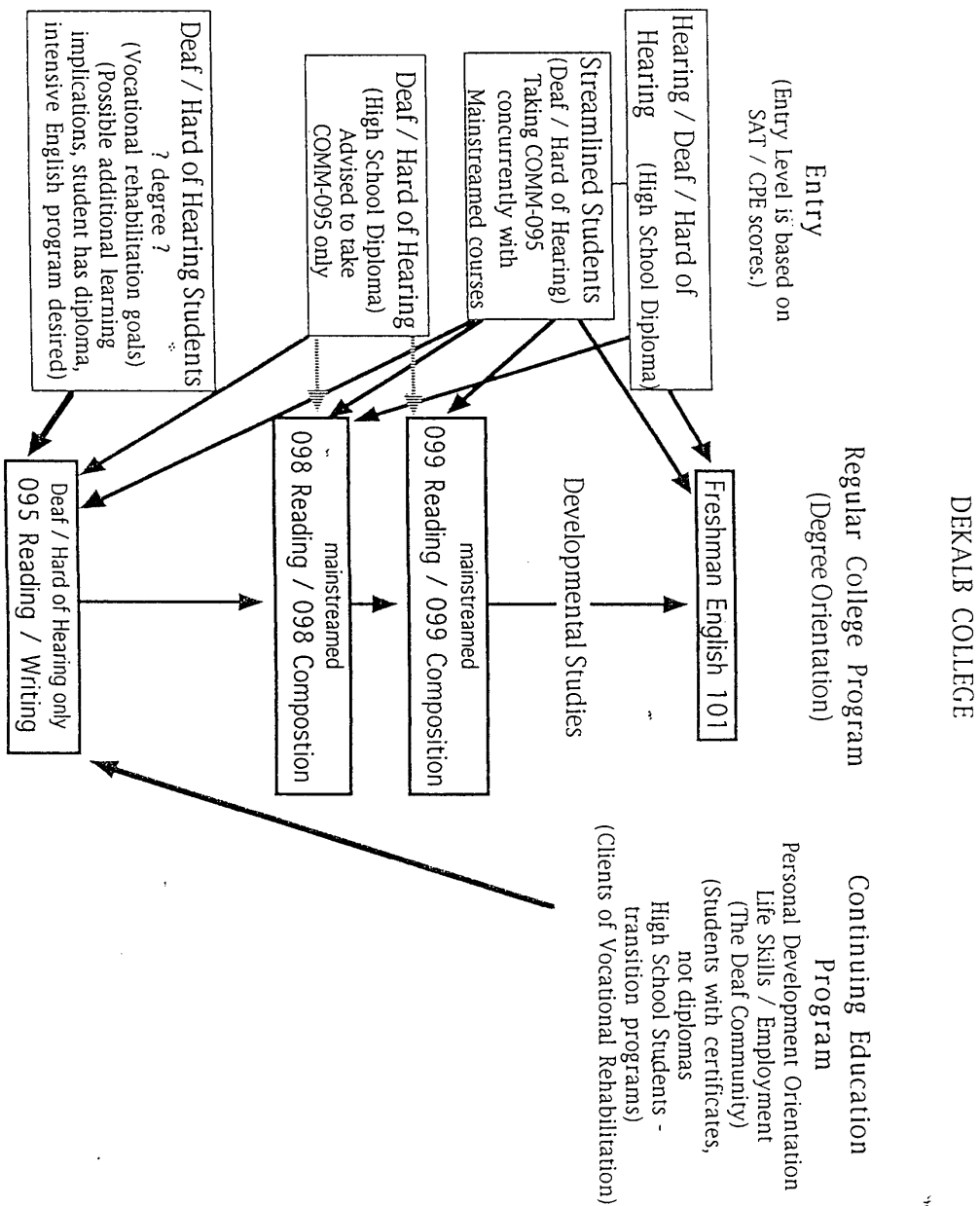
Discussion Topics

- I. What is Comm – 095 and why is it a reasonable accommodation?

- II. Understanding second language acquisition for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - A. How good is your Chinese?
 - B. Hearing vs. Deaf acquisition of English
 - 1. Learning vs. acquisition
 - 2. Bombardment (visual vs. auditory)
 - 3. “Dialect” considerations
 - C. The tissue paper analogy

- III. Postsecondary curriculum concerns
 - A. Information/concepts vs. practice
 - B. Curriculum content
 - C. Dialect considerations
 - D. The Hard of Hearing student
 - E. Grading and editor referral criteria

DeKalb College Flow Chart of English Courses



Appendix G

Curriculum Content*

All aspects of an English curriculum must lead to the wholistic activities of reading and writing. English information and concepts regarding the aspects of structure and vocabulary are addressed in this chart.

Structure		Vocabulary	
Expressive	Receptive	Expressive	Receptive
word:	Present Continuous	Four things to consider when choosing a	
	Simple Present		1. Meaning
	Special verbs		2. Pattern
	Five Basic Verb Patterns		3. Part of speech
	Count Nouns		4. Use
	Non-count Nouns		
	Past		Picture Vocabulary
	Future		Two Word Idioms
	-Ed/-Ing Adjectives		Fun Idioms
Expressions			Common English
Sequential Action	Sequential Action	Word Families	Word Families
	If/Unless Conditional Clauses		(Dictionary Use/Contextual
Clues)			

* This flow chart shows only a fraction of the curriculum content to be considered for a comprehensive reading and writing course. This chart represents layers of a comprehensive layered curriculum.

Appendix H

Five Basic Verb Patterns

GROUP I: *verb + to + verb*

want	need	expect	plan	intend
ask	forget	learn	try	promise
hope	decide	chooses	decline	seem

GROUP II: *verb + verb + ing*

enjoy	consider	finish	admit	dread
postpone	quit	stop	discuss	resist
avoid	keep	deny	mind	

GROUP III: *verb + to + verb and verb + verb + ing*

like	love
begin	hate
start	continue

GROUP IV: *verb + object + verb*

make	see
let	hear
have	help

GROUP V: *verb + object + to + verb*

permit	advise	encourage	urge	need	love
remind	allow	convince	teach	expect	hate
persuade	invite	force	want	ask	like

*Copied and adapted with permission from Gallaudet University and with the permission of Pat Byrd, Bordman, Byrd, and Schlien, 1977.

Appendix I

Sequential Action (1)

Appendix I
S. A. Chart #1

	Simple Past S.A. (one time only)	Past Continuous S.A. (one time only)	Past Repeated S.A. (happened in the past, relevant to the present)	Present Perfect S.A. (first action in the past)	Past Perfect S.A. (first action in the past)
REGULAR	I walked yesterday.	I was walking yesterday...	I walked every three hours yesterday.	I have walked. (I don't want to walk again now.)	I had walked... ...when she arrived. (second action)
IRREGULAR	I went to the store yesterday.	I was going to the store yesterday...	I went to the store every three hours yesterday.	I have gone to the store. (I don't want to go to the store again now.)	I had gone to the store... ...when she arrived. (second action)

Sequential Action (2)

Appendix J

S. A. Chart #2

Sequential Action
Before + 2nd action
After + 1st action

Habit = Simple Present (S.P.) Form
Before + S.P., + S.P.
After + S.P., + S.P.

Examples:
Before I go to bed, I brush my teeth every night.
After I brush my teeth every night, I go to bed.

Future
Before + S.P., + future
After + S.P., + future

Examples:
Before I go to bed, I will brush my teeth.
After I brush my teeth, I will go to bed.

Past
1st action + past participle (P.P.), + Simple Past

Before + Simple Past, + P.P.
After + P.P., + Simple Past

Examples:
Before I went to bed, I had brushed my teeth.
After I had brushed my teeth, I went to bed.

Past Participle = had + verb + ed
or
had + 3rd part verb

Modal Chart #1

**Modal + V + ^sing
_{ed}**

Modals = Writer's Attitude

Present and Future

1. may
can = action is permitted
2. can = able
3. may
might
can = action is possible
4. should
ought = action is probable / expected
5. should
ought to = action is advisable
6. must = almost certain
7. must = necessary

Past

Modal + have + V + ed
or
3rd part verb

1. could have
should have = the action did not happen
2. should not have
could not have = the action did happen
3. must have = certainly / sure
4. may have
might have = not sure

Appendix L

The Four Principles of Expressive Vocabulary Use

Meaning

Word Pattern

Part of Speech

Use

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Appendix M

Two Word Idioms Use

Meaning:

Can the idiom separate?

Does the idiom require a direct object?

Pronoun substitution for the direct object:

Goldberg, 1979

