

PEC Newslinks

January 2005

The Postsecondary Education Consortium serves the Southeast region of the United States, and is a consortium of state outreach and technical assistance centers which are housed at postsecondary programs serving students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The mission of the PEC is to enhance learning environments that empower these individuals. PEC promotes quality programs and services through innovative practices and outreach.

A Member
of PEPNet



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English for students who are deaf or hard of hearing: like learning Chinese?

At Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) an English instructor struggles to learn how to read and write Chi-

nese while students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing learn how to read and write English. The hearing English instructor never listens to Chinese and never attempts to speak Chinese. How is the task of the hearing instructor similar to the task of the students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing? How is it different? Whose task is easier and why? Try to learn the Chinese in the box below. As you read this article, take a break from reading once in a while, and learn this one statement. (Are you even sure it means "It's a nice day today"?)

今天天氣很好
It's a nice day today.

Georgia Perimeter College has offered an English course for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing for about sixteen years. The course is REEN 0095, and students enrolled through the college may take this course on any instructional level. Some students may be concurrently enrolled in college level courses; they may be struggling with their reading and writing assignments or with passing the Board of Regents exam as they approach sixty credit hours. Other REEN students may be concurrently enrolled in developmental reading and writing courses with their hearing peers. Some developmental students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing may be passing developmental courses but struggling to pass the Compass test to exit into college level courses. The disability services counselor may advise that a student take REEN before enrolling in other developmental courses but the choice is the student's.

Continuing Education also enrolls students in REEN 0095. Some continuing education REEN students may want to pass the high school graduation test or the GED. Sometimes vocational rehabilitation counselors send their clients to REEN through the Continuing Education department to improve reading and writing skills for work and job training related objectives. Employers also sponsor employees in REEN through Continuing Education to improve their written communication skills with co-workers and their ability to read job manuals and memos, for example. Students' goals are varied, and instruction is individualized in REEN 0095. Communication modes and preferences also vary. Georgia Perimeter College is committed to community outreach and to providing appropriate accommodations and options to students in the academic arena. (How's your Chinese coming? Are you having a nice day yet?) The State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center for Georgia (GA-SOTAC) is housed at GPC. GA-SOTAC's outreach and technical assistance activities have been influenced by GPC's English course for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. People hear about the course and have questions about the instruction and requests for training. English training for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing has taken place off campus in the community. The SOTAC has also responded to a variety of technical assistance inquiries. People want to know why some (**not all**) people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing seem to struggle with reading and writing skills and what to do about it. Testing issues related to English print are a concern for many. K-12 programs want to know how to improve their reading and writing instruction. Workshops, ongoing training opportunities, and presentations have been provided to parents, students and clients, teachers and administrators, interpreters, employees and employers, and other professionals. Every one wants an answer, a quick "fix", a packaged curriculum "that works!"

(See *Like Chinese*: continued on page 2)

Like Chinese: continued from page 1

The experiences of REEN 0095 have shown that there is no **one** curriculum, strategy, method, or approach that “works” in teaching reading and writing to people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. An eclectic approach must be considered. For some students a bicultural bilingual approach seems to bring successes, and certainly it is important that a reading, writing instructor be fluent in ASL and more than knowledgeable in bicultural bilingual instruction. Communication modes and preferences vary. Oral students take REEN as well as students who sign but have not been exposed to, instructed in, or taught ASL. Almost all students, however, have a common need. Continuing ed students and college students, despite varied goals and communication preferences and skills, need instruction that addresses the unique English structure and vocabulary issues that are exhibited in their writing and reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension strategies and writing development are addressed in other GPC courses, and college students receive that instruction with their hearing peers, with support services. The instructors of those classes, however, are not prepared to address the unique English structure and vocabulary issues that are exhibited in the reading and writing skills of many students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. English as a Second Language classes are, likewise, generally not prepared to adapt their approaches to students who do not hear the language and, therefore, do not have the same access to English. REEN 0095 focuses on the aspects of English structure and vocabulary development that are learned through auditory bombardment and are, therefore, not generally accessible to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. REEN 0095 is not taken by all students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and it is not required. It is available to any student with a hearing loss that would benefit from such instruction and chooses to take advantage of this reasonable accommodation.

English outreach activities have helped participants understand why some approaches to English instruction might be considered an accommodation. In outreach and training activities the GA-SOTAC has helped teachers incorporate appropriate English instruction into the reading and writing curriculum. Auditory bombardment vs. visual bombardment of linguistic **English** information is discussed at workshops. Our common sense tells us that it is impossible to visually bombard the brain (through signed systems) with linguistic English information at the same rate that the brain is bombarded auditorally. Hearing

people cannot turn off their hearing; they do not even have to attend to what is being said for the English, linguistic information to reach their brains. Hearing people learn the arbitrary patterns and structures of English through auditory bombardment, not through grammar instruction.

Teachers of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing must understand when English structures and patterns have meaning and when they do not. Meaning vs. arbitrary use is another instructional topic that has been developed for teacher workshops. A simple illustration of Meaning vs. Arbitrary use can be shown through the “ING Story.” See the illustration on page 3,

In the first sentence, the ING has a present continuous meaning. Paired with “am”, the ING lets us know that the act or feeling of enjoying happens one time, with a specific beginning and an end, and is continuing - the present continuous or present progressive tense. The ING in the word “going” in the second sentence has no meaning at all; this time ING is arbitrary and is simply part of a pattern that is used when some verbs are paired with a second verb. In the third sentence the ING appears to be the same structure as the first sentence (am interesting/am enjoying) but it does not convey the present continuous meaning. The third and fourth sentences use “ing and ed adjectives”. The ING in the third sentence lets the reader know that someone else thinks the subject “I” is interesting. The ING in the word “beginning” in the fifth sentence has no meaning; ING in this sentence is simply part of the spelling of the word “beginning.”

There are thousands of “ING stories” in English. It is commonly understood that as hearing people we learn our English auditorally; our brains are programmed with this linguistic information that is obtained through hearing, and then we pair our auditory memory with our visual memory when we learn to read and write. Of course reading and writing is much more than the pairing of auditory and visual memory but that is an important part of the reading and writing process. People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing do not have the same access to this linguistic information that is used in the process of learning to read and write. How does a person who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing know when ING has meaning and when it is just “thrown” into a word or sentence – arbitrarily?

Think about your Chinese sentence, the title of this article. Look at each character. Do you know which strokes have meaning and which strokes are arbitrary? Can you figure it out? If you could hear the Chinese, would it help you? How does your visual memory help you learn this Chinese? How does your auditory memory help

you learn this Chinese? How is the task of a hearing person learning to read and write Chinese without hearing it the same as the task of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing learning to read and write English? How is the task different?

An English instructor to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing must understand the patterns and structures of English and plug this instruction into a total reading and writing curriculum. When it is possible to teach English through meaning, a teacher should understand the meaning of English structures and vocabulary and have the communication skills to explain. It is important, however, to know when a structure or pattern cannot be explained, and it is important to share information about the arbitrary aspects of the English language with students. This instruction must be a deliberate part of the printed reading and writing curriculum because students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing do not have the same access to this linguistic information through auditory bombardment. This English information is not a part of regular grammar instruction for hearing people, and many teachers in K-12 programs are eager to become linguists of English so that appropriate English instruction can become a consistent part of their total reading and writing curriculum.

At GPC, students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing may take REEN 0095 to help them learn about the linguistic elements of English for which they do not have access, to improve their reading and writing skills. Are you ready to read and write Chinese? How about just one sentence? Try this one:

今天天氣很好

For more information about REEN 0095, English instruction, and English outreach topics, contact:

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Georgia's State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center (SOTAC) is part of a federal grant (PEPNet/PEC) that provides outreach and technical assistance regarding services, accommodations, and education to people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Your SOTAC is a free resource providing technical assistance and training. Visit our web site: pepnet.org

"Ing" --- Meaning or "Just Because" ?? The ING Story



*I am enjoy**ING** you.
(meaning - PC)*



*I am enjoying go**ING**
to the movies.
(memory/no meaning)*



*I am interest**ING**.
(meaning - ING adjective)*



*(I am interest**ED**.)*



*I want to start
at the begin**NING**.
(no meaning-
memory/spelling)*

think tank (n): a group or organization dedicated to problem-solving and research

—(*The American Heritage® Dictionary of Idioms*)

Hardly a week goes by that I don't get a phone call or an email from someone with questions about teaching English to college students who are deaf or hard of hearing. What are appropriate accommodations to make in the classroom? Are there good strategies for addressing repeated problems, such as subject-verb agreement? What's a reasonable expectation for working with a tutor when preparing a term paper for another class? Yikes! I'm not an English teacher, but I've spent a lot of time thinking about these questions and many, many others. And in response to the folks who need to know this information, I try to give them good resources and help them connect with other professionals who have more expertise than I do.

Those of us who have worked in postsecondary settings likely have met many bright young adults who are deaf or hard of hearing who also struggle with reading and writing English. Taking more English classes in college is probably not top on their lists of preferred activities, but it's not unusual for academic advisors to recommend developmental studies courses in reading, grammar, and composition to incoming freshmen who are deaf or hard of hearing. We've also spent countless hours working with faculty to help them understand that writing (or reading) skills do not equal intelligence. Testing becomes an issue as well as written assignments, such as term papers. It's a tough area for many staff members in Disability Services offices across the country.

Several years ago, a small group of professionals interested in discussing issues related to teaching English to college students who are deaf or hard of hearing met in Salt Lake City. It was dubbed the *English Teachers Think Tank* and served as a means of gathering people together with similar interests and experiences who were interested in sharing ideas and strategies. Over the years, the group has met at PEPNet biennial conferences during hot topics discussion sessions. Gallaudet University hosted a Think Tank meeting during the summer of 2003. It's a group without an official membership roster, and the new participants are welcome at each gathering. The critical issue is that all of the people involved have a strong desire to learn from their peers and share what they know.

The Postsecondary Education Consortium is pleased to announce that it has launched a site on its website <http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/> for the English Teachers Think Tank. Included on this site are resources, tools, and links that might be helpful to faculty teaching English to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The site also includes announcements about workshops and training opportunities.

Mark your calendars now for two upcoming events!

The Postsecondary Education Programs Network will sponsor a live teleconference on February 17, 2005 that addresses language development in individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and how that affects the acquisition of English skills. For more information, please go to the PEPNet website at www.pepnet.org.

The Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC), the Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC), and the NTID English Department will co-sponsor the next gathering of the English Teachers Think Tank at *Literacy in the English Classroom and Beyond*, a conference that will be held at NTID on June 23-25, 2005. The conference will serve to disseminate information on innovative and best practices for helping deaf students attain English literacy. It will provide a forum for practitioners to present papers on instructional practice as well as research. The audience will include those who work with deaf students at the college level, as well as those working at the pre-college level in institutes for the deaf, as itinerant or resource room teachers, or as mainstream teachers who have deaf students in their classes. Anyone whose work is related to the development of English literacy in deaf or hard-of-hearing students in middle school programs up to and through the college level is welcome. A Call for Papers will be available this fall. For more information, please go to the PEC website at <http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/>.

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions." We'd like the English

COSD

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Did you know? – The unemployment rate for college graduates with disabilities is estimated to be approximately 40%. Students with disabilities rarely use the Career Services office on campus for career planning or job placement assistance, and there still remains little, if any, coordination with on-campus Disability Services. As a result, students with disabilities often lack career goals, internships and other critical fundamental career search building blocks, making them uncompetitive versus their peers without disabilities. Recruiters having difficulty finding and accessing qualified students with disabilities compound the lack of student preparation. Moreover, they do not have sufficient experience interviewing these students. Career Services and Disability Services offices rarely work together, limiting the opportunities for college students with disabilities to participate in their career search.

Unique Nature of COSD – COSD is a national association of 400 higher education institutions, employers and US Government agencies focused on the career development and employment of college graduates with disabilities. COSD is a unique organization that identifies and leverages the intersection between three diverse constituencies: Disability Services, Career Services and Private / Public Sector Employers. The common thread is promoting the career success of all students with and without disabilities. Other national associations focus on one or two of these constituencies. Members of COSD meet annually to assess the current status of college graduates with disabilities, to brainstorm ideas and to share best practices to advance the issue.

COSD Funding and Priorities – In 2001, COSD was awarded a three-year capacity building grant from the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The grant was designed to increase the size and scope of COSD from a loose consortium into a formal association based at the University of Tennessee and to develop COSD as a specialized resource in the areas of disability and employment. Among the requirements of the grant was outreach and education to universities to encourage working relation-

ships between Disability Services and Career Services. Corporate recruiters also receive training regarding the fundamental issues facing college students with disabilities in their career search. The ODEP grant is to be extended for an additional eleven months commencing on August 1 to allow for a new larger and longer term grant to be created.

Website and Membership - The COSD website <http://www.cosdonline.org> contains a growing membership directory, Annual National Meeting information, news items and corporate and university success stories. No membership fee is charged. All members receive updated information on the activities of COSD with e-mails through the website.

6th Annual National Conference – Preparations have begun for the COSD 6th Annual National Conference to be held in Boston on the tentative dates of May 11 and 12, 2005. Merck & Co and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts will be co – hosting the event at their corporate facilities. Details will disseminated as they develop to all on the COSD website and to member on the monthly e-newsletter.

For more information, contact:

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Think Tank, continued from page 4

Teachers Think Tank to help stretch your mind with new ideas, and we hope you'll help others stretch their minds. Please join us as we continue identify resources, tools, and effective practices for teaching English to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Marcia Kolvitz, Ph.D., Associate Director
Postsecondary Education Consortium

Let Your Fingers Do the Talking!

Free Telecom Services Enrich Communication Accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Camera phones, wireless walkie-talkie-style services and voice calls sent over the Internet are just a few of the latest developments in communications technology that many people are familiar with. But the growth in innovative communications also has helped the 24 million-plus Americans who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability communicate better via the Internet, wireless devices or new types of phones that use voice-recognition software to provide “almost instant captioning” of a conversation.

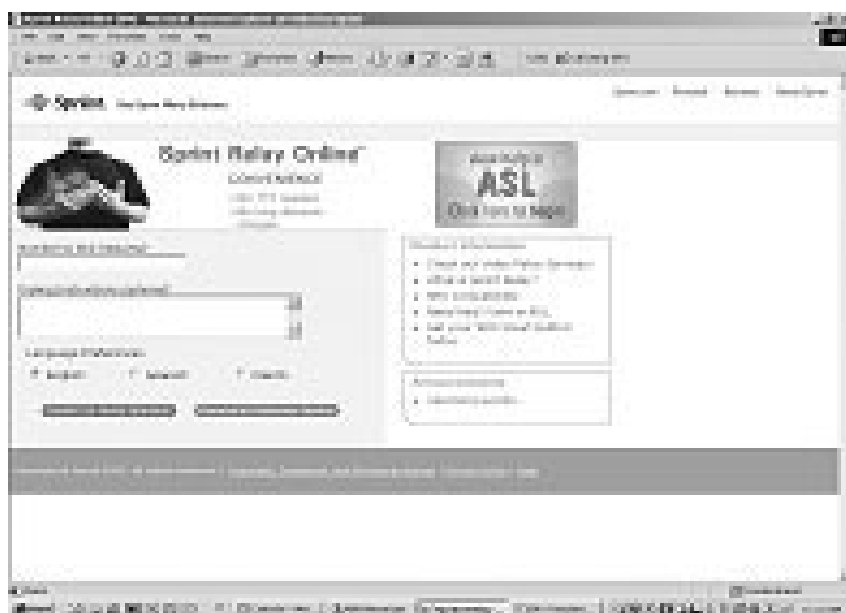
As the leading provider of assistive technologies for the deaf and hard of hearing, Sprint has 14 years of experience in providing relay services, as well as a reputation for being first to offer emerging technologies to make communications more natural and accessible than ever for anyone who has a hearing or speech disability (see www.sprintrelay.com for information). Sprint customers say the innovative services have given them better options to assist them in communicating with friends, family and co-workers.

“My husband and I are both deaf and have used TTY since 1977,” said Elizabeth Radcliffe, Sprint Relay customer and native Kansan. “TTY was helpful, however, we love video relay and can’t live

without it now! We can better understand the emotions in the conversation, and communicate faster and more naturally with our family and friends, and now our son who is in college and learned sign language when he was eight months old. We thank Sprint for offering video relay. We have several setups in our home because it is affordable and easy to use.”

Video Relay Service (VRS) was first launched by Sprint and Communications Services for the Deaf in the spring of 2002. VRS allows deaf individuals to use sign language to communicate via video conferencing equipment (i.e. webcam or videophone), a high-speed Internet connection and a video interpreter, who relays the conversation by voice to the hearing party and signs responses back to the deaf user. VRS conversations average 100 to 150 words per minute allowing for a much faster and more natural conversation versus a traditional typed relay conversation (which is closer to 60-80 words per minute).

“When we started using video relay, we were in the middle of refinancing our home mortgage. Using TTY to communicate with the bank was tedious and frustrating. Then we used video relay to talk with the bank which allowed us to use sign





language to ask our questions and clarify issues. We could better understand what the bank needed to complete the process,” said Radcliffe.

Internet Relay services is also a free service that combines TRS with the ease and ubiquity of the Internet, allowing users to make calls from any PC or Web-enabled Internet device without having to use traditional TTY equipment. To connect with a Sprint Relay Online operator visit: www.sprintrelayonline.com.

To communicate while on the go, there are now wireless relay services that provide an easy way to make a relay call. Sprint Relay WirelessSM, powered by GoAmerica, enables users to connect to a relay operator from virtually anywhere using a choice of wireless handheld devices and pagers such as a RIM Blackberry or Sidekick device.

While many relay services are best suited for individuals who are deaf or have lost most of their ability to hear, one new service is available for individuals who are hard of hearing, have experienced hearing loss later in life or for deaf individuals with good vocalization skills.

Using advanced voice recognition software, CapTelSM Relay Service essentially provides live captioning of phone conversations, allowing users to ensure they receive and understand the full context of any call. Sprint began offering *CapTel* trials in 2002 to gather information and feedback from consumers. In 2004, Sprint launched in many states as well as for retired and active federal government employees. *CapTel* satisfies all FCC requirements.



Editor's Note: During the 2004 PEPNet conference in Pittsburgh, Sprint Relay was a generous contributor. Their support enabled us to have internet access during the conference and provide an internet cafe for participants to use while at the conference. We truly appreciate their support and hope to maintain an ongoing relationship this fine organization.

Mailbox Mentors



PEC outreach and technical assistance staff members handle many questions each week from their colleagues across the region. Some are fairly simple to answer, while others seem to require a bit more brainstorming. Here's a question that sparked a bit of discussion.

Question:

I have a deaf student taking a keyboarding class. One of the requirements in the course is a series of spelling tests. How does an interpreter do this? Obviously, fingerspelling defeats the purpose; one sign could mean different words; the student doesn't lip read very well; some words don't have their own sign; etc. How can we handle this?

Response 1:

One way to handle this would be to give the student a list of words in advance. The student can meet with the interpreter to decide what sign would be used for each word. Yes, different words can be signed the same way, but because the student will have the words in advance and can determine with the interpreter how it would be signed, the student will know what word is intended. If there isn't a standard sign for the word, the student and interpreter can come up with a nuance sign that would work for the purposes of the test. The interpreter may also mouth the word along with the sign. Even if the student isn't a great lip-reader, mouthing the word combined with the pre-determined sign should help.

Response 2:

Because it's a keyboarding class, typing accuracy and speed are probably the main goals of the class. However, knowing how to spell is still important. Instead of spelling each word spoken by the instructor, an alternative might be to have the deaf student identify words that are spelled incorrectly. One approach is to give the student a list that includes all of the words that students are expected to know, but the list includes some that are spelled incorrectly. Example: *dog, fish, kow, bird, rabbit, elephant*. The student would indicate that *kow* and *rabbit* are incorrect, and also correct them to *cow* and *rabbit*.

Another approach is to present each word 2-3 times, but spelled correctly only once. The student needs to indicate which words are correct. Example:

dog — dawg — dogg
phish — fish — fysh

Response 3:

Use Universal Design! The instructors can give the definitions of the words to all students and they have to write the word. It works for everyone in the class.

Do you have a question for the experts at Mailbox Mentors?

**Email it to pec@utk.edu
or fax to 865-974-3522
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Topics Inside:

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