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APPLYING ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE METHODOLOGIES TO THE
TEACHING OF READING TO DEAF STUDENTS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Cindy Michelle Walker

June 1999

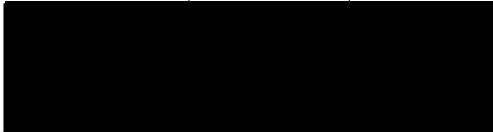
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ABSTRACT

In the past twenty years, a number of advances have been made in the teaching of second language reading. In particular, the scholarship in schema theory and the interactive model has informed the field about the importance of building background knowledge and facilitating top-down and bottom-up processes. Although effective approaches for teaching second- language reading have been successfully applied in a variety of ESL student populations, they have not been fully incorporated into the teaching of reading to deaf students whose first language is American Sign Language. In fact, deaf education has gone through a variety of changes throughout its history, demonstrating the most success when deaf students were viewed as learning English as a second language. Currently, most deaf educators accept the fact that many deaf students have ASL as their first language, and thus are learning English as their second language. Because these deaf students have a natural first language, this thesis will argue that they also share a number of similarities with other second-language learner populations, and thus can benefit from similar types of

instruction. Throughout the history of deaf education, second language reading research has not been extensively applied in the reading instruction of deaf students. Consequently, many reading instruction programs for deaf students have not included applications of prevalent second language reading research, such as schema theory and the interactive model. Thus, this thesis will examine how current approaches to teaching ESL reading can be applied to the deaf classroom through a comparison of ASL and traditional ESL students, discussion of ESL reading theories and applications, and an analysis of reading instruction in a classroom with deaf students. The findings from the current research on ESL reading theories can profit deaf students as they progress in their journey of learning to read in a second language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF DEAF EDUCATION	8
Nineteenth Century: Beginnings of ASL and Deaf Education in the United States	8
Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Oralism Dominates	10
Mid-Twentieth Century: Total Communication Approaches	14
Late Twentieth Century: Bilingual ASL-English Education	18
CHAPTER 3: A COMPARISON OF ESL AND ASL STUDENTS	23
Linguistic Challenges: Comprehensible Input	24
Social Distance from the L2 Culture: General Resistance	25
Social Distance of ASL Students	28
The Importance of Background Knowledge for ESL and ASL Learners	32
Motivation to Learn the L2	35
Motivation and the ASL Student	36
Conclusion	38
CHAPTER 4: THEORIES OF SECOND LANGUAGE READING AND THEIR TEACHING APPLICATIONS	40
Schema Theory	41

Interactive Model	45
Implications and Applications of the Interactive Model and Schema Theory for Second-Language Reading	49
Pre-reading Activities	49
During Reading Activities	54
Post-reading Activities	55
Conclusion	61
CHAPTER 5: OBSERVATIONS OF A READING CLASSROOM FOR HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS AND CONCLUSIONS	63
Method	64
Subjects	64
Materials	65
Findings from the Classroom Observation	66
Pre-reading Activities	67
Analysis and Recommendations for Pre-reading Activities	72
During Reading Activities	76
Analysis and Recommendations for During Reading Activities	77
Post-reading Activities	80
Analysis and Recommendations for Post-reading Activities	81
Conclusions and Further Areas of Research	84

APPENDIX A:	"NO GREATER GIFT" BY JOSEF ANDERSON	86
APPENDIX B:	SPELLING WORDS FROM "NO GREATER GIFT"	93
APPENDIX C:	QUESTIONS FROM "NO GREATER GIFT"	94
APPENDIX D:	STUDENT JOURNAL	97
APPENDIX E:	HAIKU POEM EXAMPLE	98
APPENDIX F:	CLOZE POEM FROM STORY	99
REFERENCES	100

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years, increasing numbers of researchers have begun to approach the field of teaching literacy skills to deaf students with a new perspective. Many educators have recognized the need for deaf students to acquire both sign language and English literacy skills in order to succeed academically and professionally. Whereas in the past deaf education was viewed as teaching disabled students, many present-day educational and linguistic researchers view deaf education from a bilingual or second-language perspective. Many current educators are acknowledging the need for deaf students to learn American Sign Language (ASL) as their first language and English as their second language. Although there has been an increase in accepting such an approach, there has still been a limited amount of research regarding the rationale for and application of teaching English as a second language to deaf students. For over a century, deaf educators had taught deaf students English as a first language (L1), thus ignoring the population of deaf students whose L1 was American Sign Language (ASL). It is this latter population of deaf students that I will be

focusing on throughout this thesis in order to show how ESL reading methods can be applied to this population. For ease of reference, I will use the term "ASL students" to refer to this population of deaf students who have ASL as their L1 and are learning English as their second language (L2). The term "ESL students" refers to the general population of hearing adult language learners whose L1 is not English and who are learning English as their L2. It is my goal in this thesis to apply and adapt approaches of ESL reading instruction to teaching ASL students.

Currently, research in the area of how deaf children acquire their first language (whether signed or spoken) is abundant (Bochner and Albertini, 1988; Brown, 1987; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Gee and Goodhart, 1988; McAnally, Rose, and Quigley, 1987). Researchers such as Michael Strong (1988) in *Language Learning and Deafness*, Paul and Quigley (1994) in *Language and Deafness*, and Barbara Schirmer (1994) in *Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf* have all contributed important analyses of language acquisition and development among deaf children. They have all shown that deaf children

acquire first languages in the same way as hearing children, but only when these deaf children have access to a visual language. When these deaf children are exposed only to spoken language (which they cannot hear), their language acquisition is often stunted or altogether halted until they receive accessible visual language input. Researchers found that the lack of linguistic input in the early years has many consequences in these deaf children's academic lives. According to Johnson, Liddell, and Erting (1989), "When a deaf child of hearing parents enters elementary school, that child is typically already well behind children with normal hearing in such critical areas as linguistic proficiency (in either spoken English or in a signed language), factual knowledge about the world, and social adjustment" (p. 1).

In contrast to deaf children who do not acquire ASL in their early years, ASL students have the advantage of having an accessible first language, since ASL is visual rather than spoken. Originally, ASL was not accepted as a language in the United States because of its visual mode; however, ASL has now been formally acknowledged as a genuine language. Ursula Bellugi of the Salk Institute

affirms that ASL "is an autonomous language with its own mechanisms for relating visual form with meaning. ASL has evolved linguistic devices that are not derived from those of English or any other spoken language" (1986, p.12). Because ASL students have acquired a true L1, they are better equipped to acquire a second language and consistently demonstrate higher levels of English reading ability (Paul and Quigley, 1994). Although the language learning abilities of ASL students are better than that of their non-ASL deaf counterparts, they still fall significantly short of the English literacy levels of hearing students (Johnson, Liddell, and Erting, 1989; Bochner and Albertini, 1988). This lower academic level among ASL students has been attributed to a variety of social, psychological, and educational factors (Bochner and Albertini, 1988; Humphries, Martin, and Coye, 1989). Although these factors have a significant impact on the teaching of ASL students, little research has actually been conducted on how these factors should be considered in developing approaches to teaching English reading skills to ASL students. In addition, there has been little research exploring the application of research in

other fields, such as second-language learning in hearing populations, to the approaches of teaching English to ASL students. Conversely, there is an abundance of research in the field of teaching reading to ESL students. Much of this research on reading has the potential to help educators learn how to better help ASL students overcome the barriers to English literacy.

Therefore, this thesis will attempt to contribute to the field's knowledge of deaf education by exploring how ESL reading theories and pedagogical approaches can be applied to the teaching of English reading skills to ASL students. In order to understand the barriers to learning for the ASL student, in Chapter 2, I will briefly discuss the historical background of deaf education as it relates to the educational profile of the deaf student. Then, in Chapter 3, I will outline the similarities between the ESL student and the ASL student, so as to establish a rationale for the use of second-language learning theories and ESL teaching methodologies in an adapted form for the ASL student. Because there has been little research that compares the needs of the two groups, I will merge and synthesize research from both areas. In response to some

of the similarities between the two groups, I will examine how ASL teaching methodologies can incorporate insights from second-language research on social distance, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. In Chapter 4, I will review the two most prominent theories related to teaching reading as a second language, schema theory and the interactive model, and I will show how they help inform methodologies involved in teaching deaf children. In both perspectives, the interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the text is the foundation for the reading process. I will also discuss the implications of these theories for the teaching of reading to ASL students. In Chapter 5, I will examine the teaching practices of a high-school teacher for the deaf in order to assess what kinds of methods are currently being used in a typical reading classroom for deaf students. In addition, I will make recommendations on how the theories discussed in Chapter 4 could be applied to teaching reading in a deaf classroom situation. Finally, I will conclude this thesis by discussing the need for further research on the application of ESL reading theories for the ASL student in order to find more ways to

apply these theories to teaching reading in the deaf
classroom.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF DEAF EDUCATION

The American deaf community has a complex and unique history that plays a significant role in the identity of many ASL students. It is important for teachers and researchers of ASL students to understand the students' history and cultural identity in order to better understand this populations' learning needs and challenges. This chapter will give an overview of the educational and social history of the deaf in order to show the importance of the specific language-learning needs of the ASL student.

NINETEENTH CENTURY: BEGINNINGS OF ASL AND DEAF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

American deaf culture emerged as a unique and distinct entity in the early nineteenth century with the emergence of ASL. Since this time, many factors have contributed to the changes in the education and social treatment of the deaf community. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, ASL emerged as the prevailing language of the deaf in the United States. ASL resulted from a mixture of the sign language being used on Martha's Vineyard (a community that had a significantly high

population of deaf people in the 1800s) and the French Sign Language brought over by Laurent Clerc and Thomas Gallaudet in 1817 (Moore and Levitan, 1992). Although ASL was considered the language of the deaf, Lou Ann Walker (1986) contends that "for centuries there have been two distinct attitudes about how deaf people should be taught: the oralists believe in speaking and lipreading without ever signing; and the manualists are pro-signing in American Sign Language (ASL)..., and there is also a camp of compromise--those who favor 'total communication,' or signing while speaking in full sentences" (p.28). Although there were opposing schools of thought, most deaf students were taught English through ASL, which had a very structured grammar memorization method (similar to that of the grammar-translation method). Lane (1992) reports that all schools of the deaf used ASL as the language of instruction in this era. There were other methods used; for example, some deaf schools attempted to use Signed English (using signs in the grammatical structure of English), but this died out by the 1830s (McAnally, Rose, and Quigley, 1987). According to McAnally, Rose, and Quigley (1987), "Structured approaches with memorization

of rules and grammatical forms dominated" (p. 57). Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, the emphasis on structured grammar and language teaching began to shift to more natural methods of language instruction by using fingerspelling, ASL, speech, speechreading, and writing (McAnally, Rose and Quigley, 1987). These methods were often used individually; however, some schools used combinations of these methods.

LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES: ORALISM DOMINATES

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the use of ASL had dwindled in both the oralist and total communication schools. Oralist schools continued to forbid all forms of sign language, while many schools of the deaf started to replace ASL with Signed English. Despite the decline of ASL, schools of the deaf were growing; by 1867, there were 26 schools of the deaf in the United States; and, by 1907, there were 139 of these schools, but none were using ASL as the mode of instruction (Lane, 1992). Oralist schools taught deaf children by means of lipreading, speaking (through speech therapy), and writing. In addition, both deaf and oralist

schools continued to use the grammar translation method for teaching English, having students learn grammatical rules and memorize vocabulary out of context. Proponents of oralism argued that language in the form of speech was what separated humans from animals. Thus, oralists fervently preached that deaf children had to learn speech in order to be normal, rather than allowing them to use a "substandard" and "less intelligent" means of communication through sign language.

Because of this prejudice, only "oral failures" were permitted to use sign language in the classroom (Strong, 1988, p. 88). Sign language became a stigma of an "animalistic" kind of communication; thus, deaf people who used ASL often faced ridicule. Alexander Graham Bell, the most predominant advocate of oralism, as well as other oralists, attempted to take drastic measures to eradicate sign language altogether (Wolkomir, 1992). "In order to combat the 'formation of a deaf variety of the human race' (1883), Bell advocated several preventative measures, which included the suppression of Sign Language, the elimination of residential schools, the outlawing of deaf

intermarriage and the prohibition of deaf teachers" (Strong, 1988, p.88).

Oralists suppressed the use of ASL in deaf education throughout the nineteenth century, although some small deaf schools continued to use other forms of sign language. The oralist perspective resulted in thousands of deaf people being deprived of a meaningful education, since so much time in school was devoted to lipreading, speaking, and practicing through rote memorization. It is important to note that this method of teaching was particularly difficult for severely deafened students; according to Walker (1980), "[Even] the best lip-readers in the world actually 'read' only twenty-five percent of what's said; the rest is contextual piecing together of ideas and expected conversations. The average deaf person understands far less" (p. 19).

Because of the emphasis on speech, much of the instruction time for deaf students was spent on oral skills, rather than focusing on academic reading and writing skills. Furthermore, students were taught grammar and writing through explicit memorization and decontextualized explanations and practice (McAnally,

Rose, and Quigley, 1987). Current research shows that this type of teaching has never been as effective as the more current methods (Diaz-Maccioli, 1994). Most of the methods were also unsuccessful because they ignored the fact that most of the students did not have an adequate first language or, more simply, did not have a *recognized* first language. Oralism continued to surge in popularity with the outcome of the Milan Conferences in the late 1800s, where educators of the deaf decided that signs were inferior to speech and should be prohibited in the deaf classroom (Lane, 1992). During this time, even schools for the deaf began to forbid the use of ASL, giving severe punishments for the use of signs (Lane, 1992).

Most deaf people saw this rejection of their language (ASL) as oppressive. Many in the deaf community began to grow in their resentment of hearing educators. Lane (1992) states that "the deaf press labeled oralism the method of 'violence, oppression, obscurantism, and charlatanism, which only makes idiots of the poor deaf-mute children'" (p. 117). During this period, deaf people's protests were ignored, thus increasing the already growing tension between the deaf and hearing

cultures. In response to this oppression and prejudice, a majority of those in the deaf community developed an ingrained hostility toward the hearing world, which still exists today (Lane, 1992). This hostility and lack of trust toward the hearing community and its education system created an even more pronounced sense of social distance, resulting in a high level of affective resistance to acquiring Standard English. Deaf students who were enculturated into the deaf culture developed this distrust toward their hearing teachers, thus increasing the difficulty of their educational experience. This view of deaf education has, unfortunately, continued to develop over decades and has continued to be viewed as the "education of the disabled" (Johnson, Liddell, and Erting, 1989, p. 3).

MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY: TOTAL COMMUNICATION APPROACHES

Because of the clear debate regarding the education of the deaf, during the mid-1900s, manual language reemerged as a mode of instruction for the deaf. Although grammar-translation and speech production remained strongholds in deaf education, Signed English and ASL

gained some ground. "The status of ASL and manual approaches changed substantially in the 1960s" (Lou, 1988, p.88). A variety of factors contributed to the increase in the acceptance and use of sign language, especially ASL, including, most importantly, linguist William Stokoe's seminal research supporting ASL as a legitimate language (Lou, 1988). ASL's acceptance as a bonafide language by linguists and educators began as a result of the impact of Stokoe's research.

Further research by scholars in various fields following Stokoe's research also propelled the acceptance of ASL as a language and its use in the classroom (Barnum, 1984; Quigley and Paul, 1984; Reagan, 1988). However, because of a century of oralist attitudes and teaching against sign language, educators were slow to allow any ASL to be used in the teaching of the deaf. Speech and oral production remained a stronghold in most public schools, thus continuing the cycle of deaf children spending valuable language learning time in speech practice with audiologists and speech therapists. Johnson, Liddell, and Erting (1989) wrote about this problem:

Over the subsequent years, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on such a child's education (the deaf child). The money pays for teachers with special training in the education of deaf children, audiological services, technological devices to assist hearing, speech teachers, and the latest computer hardware and software. Virtually all of this effort is designed to help children acquire English through the production and understanding of sounds (p. 2).

Those classrooms that did incorporate sign adopted Signed English rather than embracing ASL as the natural language of the deaf and utilizing it in educating deaf children; educators also began using "Signed English" (signs created by hearing educators produced in English word order). Speech, lipreading, writing, and various other methods remaining from the oral tradition also continued to be used in these classrooms (Lane, 1992). There were negative reactions regarding Signed English. For example, according to Wolkomir (1992), Signed English is "like having Japanese spoken to English-speaking students with an interpreter shouting occasional English words at them" (p. 35). In contrast to Signed English, ASL has its own logical way of ordering signs in order to communicate ideas more efficiently and effectively than Signed English.

Teaching deaf children through Signed English became the predominant method and was termed "Total Communication" or TC. TC still used some grammar-translation but also allowed for other more communicative methods of teaching in the classroom. Although this new method of teaching seemed like an improvement, many proponents of deaf education viewed it as "crypto-oralism, for the essence of Total Communication is to require students to comprehend and learn subject matter through spoken English, albeit supported by sign" (Johnson, Liddell, and Erting, 1989, p. 13). Educators were still not taking into account the deaf students' first language in their teaching of English literacy skills.

Mainstreaming of deaf students into the public schools continued to perpetuate the use of TC, especially after the passage of Public Law 94-142 (the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act") in 1975. This law, according to Reagan (1988), "requires that children with special needs be placed in the 'least restrictive environment'--a phrase that might well be described as pregnant with potential misunderstandings" (p. 4). To many administrators, the idea of the least restrictive

environment was interpreted as an obligation to place deaf and hard-of-hearing students into regular classes, sometimes with an interpreter (Reagan, 1988). ASL was again being pushed aside and ignored by educators, as mainstreaming and Signed English dominated the education system, along with a few remaining Oral schools. The use of Signed English, which is a code--not a language--, aggravated the deaf community's hostility toward hearing educators and schools.

LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY: BILINGUAL ASL-ENGLISH EDUCATION

Finally, greater use of ASL in the teaching of deaf students came with the emergence of linguistic research in the 1960s and 1970s. This research revealed "that deaf children with deaf parents (who use ASL as a native language) achieve more academically than deaf children with hearing parents, and that early use of Sign Language did not, after all, retard speech development" (Strong, 1988, p.88). With this evidence, support for using ASL in the classroom began to grow. Along with this new support for ASL, bilingual approaches for teaching various

language and content skills also gained support among researchers and scholars of deaf education.

The bilingual method makes use of both English and ASL as language modes in the classroom (with increasing use of English as the educational process progresses) for teaching various school subjects, such as reading, writing, mathematics, history, and science. In addition, other features, according to Reagan (1988), would include both the study of Anglo-American culture, various oppressed cultural groups, as well as the deaf culture.

The bilingual method of teaching the deaf has been introduced with some success in a small number of American schools, as well as schools in other countries, such as Denmark (Wolkomir, 1992). As of 1992, there were only six programs in the United States using the bilingual method (Wolkomir, 1992). The bilingual method approaches the process of learning by gradually introducing the L2 (English, mostly in written form) into the student's curriculum. In the beginning stages, the student learns most of the content material in their L1 (ASL); and, as they progress through school, they increasingly learn English. According to Lane, "bilingual/bicultural

instruction includes many components: academic subjects taught transitionally at least in the pupil's primary language; English taught as a second language (ESL); the history, culture, and language arts of the student's minority-language group; American culture and history" (p. 167). The advantage of this approach over past methods of teaching the deaf is that the deaf students are able to communicate and understand content material through a language they can easily access. However, a problem occurs in this method because of the limited means by which deaf students can learn through English, since spoken English is not generally accessible for them. Although the bilingual method allows for more content area study, it still does not necessarily incorporate the use of current methods of teaching English as a second language (ESL), as it only mandates the use of ASL and the teaching of deaf culture. At any rate, these methods for teaching ESL could prove useful for educators of the deaf in bilingual or TC programs.

In spite of some support for bilingual education for the deaf, the application of bilingual approaches has remained limited in schools because most teachers of the

deaf were educated during the TC era and never learned ASL. Reagan (1988) also attributes resistance to the bilingual method to the fact that most "educators and educational policy-makers in bilingual and multicultural education, as well as those in related areas, have generally overlooked the deaf as an oppressed and dominated cultural and linguistic minority" (p. 4). Linguists, on the other hand, have embraced ASL as a language, but, according to Strong (1988), "this new sensitivity has not yet been integrated into the institutions and professions serving the Deaf community" (p. 111).

Because English is the L2 of ASL students, Leo Jacobs, a scholar from Gallaudet University, a prominent deaf university, has suggested that "English be taught as a second language later with the use of ASL" (Jacobs, 1989, p.127). In order to assess the validity and usefulness of using ESL reading methods for the ASL student, it needs to be shown that their language learning needs are similar to that of hearing ESL students. In showing that their needs do correlate to those of hearing

ESL students, ESL reading approaches can be justifiably applied in the teaching of ASL students.

CHAPTER 3: A COMPARISON OF ESL AND ASL STUDENTS

There has been a great deal of research into the teaching of language to both ESL students and deaf students. However, not much research has merged the two areas together, so as to look at the population of ASL students through an ESL perspective. In order to ascertain whether ESL reading methodologies can be useful in teaching literacy skills to ASL students, it is necessary to examine and compare the needs of both student groups. Although these two groups vary somewhat in their backgrounds, they are both considered L2 learners. However, both ESL and ASL students have unique cultural, educational, and linguistic characteristics that distinguish them from L1 students.

While a number of similarities could be highlighted between these two groups of L2 learners, this chapter focuses on their similarities in the areas of linguistic challenges, social distance, background knowledge, and motivation. Drawing on scholarship from both deaf education and ESL, this chapter compares the characteristics and language learning needs of adolescent and adult ASL and ESL students and argues that the

similarities between the two groups suggest that ASL students may benefit from similar types of teaching approaches for developing L2 reading skills.

LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES: COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

Before discussing the use of reading, it is first necessary to explore some of the challenges that face this particular group. Both ESL and ASL learners deal with a variety of similar linguistic challenges in acquiring literacy in an L2. At the most basic level, both kinds of learners need comprehensible input in order to develop proficiency in English literacy skills. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, L2 learners can only learn language by receiving messages that they understand (1985). Students need to be given input that is only slightly above their current level of understanding. If teachers can provide enough comprehensible input, Krashen (1985) states that "the necessary grammar is automatically provided" (p. 2). For ESL students, comprehensible input in the L2 can be provided through spoken, visual, or written means. However, in the case of the ASL student, the comprehensible input can only be provided through

written or visual means. Therefore, in some cases, ASL is used in the classroom to convey certain ideas that are too difficult to be communicated through written means.

Because ASL students must have written or visual input, they may have some additional problems in acquiring certain reading skills (as they cannot hear the phonetic sounds that correspond to the written symbols in the texts they are reading). However, their difficulties with spoken English need not preclude their acquisition of written English, as both ASL and ESL students encounter linguistic challenges in understanding both spoken and written linguistic input in the L2. Therefore, it is important for teachers of both these groups to provide comprehensible input in whatever media that best serves the students.

SOCIAL DISTANCE FROM THE L2 CULTURE: GENERAL RESISTANCE

The deaf and ESL research suggests that another similarity between ASL and ESL learners is the social distance which they experience between their L1 and L2 cultures. Social distance occurs when a language learner psychologically or socially feels no closeness with the L2

culture. Because culture is a part of the language-learning process for all L2 students, social distance can prevent or hinder their L2 learning progress as they may perceive the L2 as part of the outgroup threat to their culture. Sociologists Giles and Evans, Jr. (1990) explain conflict theory as a situation in which a group of people who perceive the outgroup to be a threat will probably increase their perception of social distance from the culture of the outgroup. Moreover, "collective identification leads to increased internal cohesion among ingroup members and to feelings of disdain or repulsion toward the outgroup or people of dissimilar social origin" (Giles & Evans, Jr., 1990, p. 30). Therefore, the greater the ingroup solidarity, the greater the social distance from the perceived outgroup. Thus, acquiring the L2 is intricately related to acquiring the L2 culture. In *Cultural Input in Second Language Learning* (1985), Saville-Troike argues that:

We cannot adequately understand linguistic competence without recognizing it as part of communicative competence, so it is my position that we cannot fully understand, or even satisfactorily study, second language acquisition unless we see it as part of a larger whole--the acquisition of a second culture (p. 58).

Because language is a part of culture, students who experience conflicts with an L2 culture may also have difficulties acquiring the language.

Therefore, it is common for the L2 student to face value conflicts in response to the differing cultural norms and value systems (Brown, 1987; Savielle-Troike, 1985). Consequently, these value conflicts often affect the acquisition of the L2 because students are unwilling to fully acculturate into the L2 culture. According to Schumann's Acculturation Model (as cited in Gass and Selinker, 1994), L2 students will only fully learn the L2 if they acculturate into the L2 culture. Schumann, who has focused on hearing L2 learners (e.g. ESL students), describes two types of situations where a sense of social distance develops between the learner and the L2, making acculturation difficult. One such situation occurs when both groups perceive the L2 language group as dominant and negative attitudes already exist between the cultures, causing them to keep the status quo. Social distance can also occur when both groups view the L2 group as subordinate to the target-language group (Brown, 1987). These situations usually create social distance for the L2

learner; and, as the social distance increases, their success in learning the language decreases (Brown, 1987).

Because of such social distance, both ESL and ASL students are sometimes plagued with affective resistance to acquiring the L2. According to Krashen (1985), "the 'affective filter' is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition" (p. 3). When L2 students face cultural conflicts because of differences in cultural assumptions or values, they often raise their affective filter, so that language learning becomes much more difficult. In effect, both groups of students may resist acquiring L2 reading and writing abilities and sometimes have difficulties in interpreting L2 texts.

SOCIAL DISTANCE OF ASL STUDENTS

ASL students fit into Schumann's description of the second type of social distance scenario, where both the groups view the L2 group as subordinate to the L1 group. In this case, both those in hearing culture and the deaf community view those in the deaf community as subordinate and oppressed by hearing society. Some ASL students have

developed a sense of distance from the English-speaking culture because of their bonds to the deaf community, a community that has distanced itself from the hearing world (Vernon and Andrews, 1990; Lane, 1992). The bonds of those in the deaf culture increase as a result of the discrimination that they continue to encounter from the hearing world.

Furthermore, many in the deaf community perceive hearing teachers and the regular use of spoken English as a threat to their in-group closeness. As Giles and Evans, Jr. (1990) suggest, the L2 group may perceive the L1 culture as an outgroup threat; and, thus, the L2 group will increase their social distance. In the case of the deaf community, the hearing society is perceived to be the outgroup; thus, ASL students' culture may predispose them to put up barriers to learning English at a native-like level because of its association with the hearing world. In response to the hearing world's dominance, Bahan (1989) declares, "What right do hearing people have to impose on us the dominance of their world?" (p. 47). Although ASL students are born in the United States, most of them develop a unique set of cultural values when they become a

part of the deaf culture, a culture which places a great deal of importance on the language of their social identity--ASL. Therefore, the deaf culture can be distinguished from the hearing culture in many integral ways. Reagan (1988) asserts, "The deaf also constitute a distinctive subcultural entity in contemporary American society" (p. 2). Members of the deaf culture include those who have some kind of hearing loss, those who use ASL, and those who share a common set of values and norms (Reagan, 1988).

The solidarity within the deaf community and its resistance to mainstream culture is reflected in some members' view that those who are fully accepted by the hearing world are "traitors." According to one deaf poet, "The hearing people do not treat me right....Their ideas are false. They are hypocrites. They mold deaf people's lives. Not mine. Not my soul. I won't let them reshape me....Deep in my body there is a flame" (Wilcox, 1989, p. 4). This antipathy toward total acceptance by the mainstream culture proceeds from a cultural response to a history of oppression and discrimination of deaf people.

Core members of the deaf community are resistant to full assimilation within the hearing world. For instance, Emoungu (1992) addresses the issue of how minority groups (specifically that of black Americans) respond to oppression in that, "the negative political conditions arising from these groups' oppression and resistance have led to the development among them of an 'oppositional culture,' or a confrontational disposition toward the mainstream culture" (p. 73). In accordance with this theory, an oppositional culture has emerged in the deaf culture. Humphries (1993) explains that most deaf people do not want to become one of "them" (hearing people who want to make deaf people look, talk, and act more like them (Humphries, 1993). In short, they want the deaf community to do the impossible: fully assimilate into the hearing community.

Another reason many of those in the deaf community do not want to fully assimilate into the hearing world is that they have strong bonds to their culture and feel that it provides a safe and enjoyable atmosphere to socialize and exist. According to Humphries (1993), members of the deaf community do not want to see a total assimilation in

the hearing world because "deaf people perceive, quite correctly, that the quality of their lives as integrated Americans is ensured by the presence of and access to a large Deaf community which provides a rich cultural and social life" (p. 9). Therefore, assimilation is not a valued goal among those in the deaf community. According to Emoungu (1992), "Assimilation into the system is generally viewed as being out of the question and as tantamount to being coopted by it" (p. 73). By fully assimilating into hearing society, deaf people would lose a large part of their identity. Because of social distance and the lack of total assimilation into the hearing culture, ASL students sometimes lack certain cultural experiences and background knowledge from the L1 culture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR ESL AND ASL LEARNERS

Cultural and linguistic background knowledge help L2 students to decipher and interpret texts more efficiently. However, because many ASL students do not always have the background knowledge related to a particular reading text, or may in fact have conflicting cultural knowledge, they

encounter difficulties in comprehending these texts. Floyd and Carrell (1987) report that cultural misunderstandings cause many ESL learners to make incorrect interpretations about the text, thus decreasing their reading comprehension.

ESL and ASL students are similar in that they often lack background knowledge that includes cultural assumptions about the content of written genres. This knowledge deficiency may make acquisition of L2 literacy particularly challenging. Indeed, with respect to background knowledge, ASL students may actually have a cultural advantage over typical ESL students. Although ASL students live within the deaf culture, they are a subculture of the larger American community and, therefore, will have access to some kinds of knowledge about their environment, neighborhood, economy, entertainment, etc. that an ESL student from another country might not have.

In the second-language classroom, building L2 students' knowledge of the target language culture is extremely important for effective reading. If L2 students are not familiar with the content of the text, their

comprehension will be impeded (Carrell, 1988). According to Carrell (1988), "Implicit cultural content knowledge presupposed by a text and a reader's own cultural background knowledge of content interact to make texts whose content is based on one's own culture easier to read and understand than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent texts based on a less familiar, distant culture" (p. 104). Research has even found that native speakers that are part of a subculture also need to be aware of the specific cultural background of texts for successful comprehension (Steffensen, 1987). Therefore, it is crucial for both ESL and ASL students to activate their current background knowledge as well as gain additional knowledge needed to comprehend texts they read in English.

Unfortunately, however, ASL students' background knowledge and cultural assumptions are often ignored. Wilcox (1989) describes the hearing classroom from the perspective of a deaf student as a place where they are seen as not having knowledge because of their hearing loss, rather than being seen as learners who have a different kind of background knowledge that can be used to

help them understand the material (p. 4). Hearing teachers need to be aware of the fact that their ASL students may hold different cultural assumptions about a text or topic being discussed in class. If the teacher can use what the student already knows and then build upon that knowledge by making these students aware of additional cultural information, they will facilitate greater success in the students' L2 reading.

MOTIVATION TO LEARN THE L2

Another important aspect of L2 learning is motivation for both ESL and ASL students. Focusing on L2 learners, Oxford (1993) states that "Motivation determines the extent of active, personal engagement in learning" (p. 190). Therefore, if motivation is lacking, the student will likely not engage as much in the learning process, including the comprehension of reading texts. Brown (1987) actually distinguishes between two kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Whereas instrumental motivation refers to the desire to learn the L2 in order to achieve some practical purpose (such as getting a good job), integrative motivation is related to

the desire of the learner to become part of the L2 culture (Brown, 1987). Students vary in the kind of motivation with which they approach language learning, but both kinds of motivation can facilitate the L2 process, including the comprehension of reading texts. It is clear that attitudes toward the L2 culture affect the motivation of the student; and, if the student's motivation is decreased, they will likely have much less success in learning the L2 (Brown, 1987).

MOTIVATION AND THE ASL STUDENT

Although Brown's motivation categories have been applied mainly to hearing L2 learners, they are also germane to ASL learners of English. ASL students usually approach learning English with a primarily instrumental motivation, as they often want to learn enough English to get a good job in hearing society and accomplish their daily activities in the hearing world. Therefore, ASL students are often motivated to learn enough English to succeed in the L2 society, such as being able to read business memos. On the other hand, they lack the integrative motivation because they do not want to become

part of hearing culture. Because of the social distance ASL students experience with respect to the hearing culture, their motivation to acquire English is negatively affected. In addition, many ASL students distrust hearing teachers and see the educational system as one that does not respect their culture or language. According to Humphries (1993), "Assimilation and integration for Deaf people, therefore, is acceptable in a context in which Deaf people retain their language and their community. Then, and only then, are they able to center themselves and approach functioning in the world of others" (1993, p. 10). In light of this view, it seems teaching English as a second language to ASL students will only be successful if teachers allow students to remain secure in their own cultural and linguistic identity, while sufficiently bringing them into the L2 culture and language by which they can succeed in the university environment (where reading and writing in English will be absolutely necessary).

Instructors may also need to be aware of the fact that ASL students' motivation may be decreased because of the problems and attitudes they encounter in the hearing

world, including those of their hearing peers. According to Cappelli, Daniels, Durieux-Smith, McGrath, and Neuss (1995), "Children with hearing impairments are more likely to be rejected by their peers than are normally hearing children" (p. 197). As a result, many mainstreamed ASL students have problems in school that can interfere with their academic skills and motivation for learning.

Results of various research studies show that hearing-impaired students have behavioral problems, lowered self-esteem, perceptions of lower self-esteem, and difficulty making friends (Cappelli, Daniels, Durieux-Smith, McGrath, and Neuss, 1995). Such problems lead to decreased motivation for learning among ASL students.

CONCLUSION

In view of the significant similarities between ESL and ASL students in regards to their language-learning needs and challenges, it seems reasonable that ESL methodologies can be used to teach English literacy skills to ASL students. Both groups of students require specific teaching methodologies that consider these needs. With this in mind, in the next chapter, I will discuss the most prominent ESL methodologies for teaching reading and then

discuss how they can be applied to the teaching of ASL students.

CHAPTER 4: THEORIES OF SECOND LANGUAGE READING AND THEIR TEACHING APPLICATIONS

During the past 30 years, ESL reading research has fallen into two major theoretical camps within the Psycholinguistic-Cognitive Perspective: schema theory and the interactive model of reading. Although both theories are interrelated, they each focus on different aspects of the cognitive process. Researchers have delved into the cognitive and social elements of how people read (the thinking processes and the social discourse of the text), thus creating greater metacognitive awareness of how we read. A number of applications for teaching ESL reading have grown out of these theoretical frameworks. In light of the similarities between ESL and ASL learners, theoretical and pedagogical frameworks for conceptualizing ESL reading and ESL reading instruction may be usefully applied to helping ASL students' acquire reading skills in English. In this chapter, ESL reading theories, specifically schema theory and the interactive model, and related teaching applications are surveyed. Also discussed are proposed ways that teachers can best apply these frameworks in teaching literacy skills to ASL students.

The two most commonly accepted theories today, schema theory and the interactive model, both emerged out of research on the cognitive processes of reading. These theories focus on the thinking processes of readers as they interact with the text.

SCHEMA THEORY

The concept of "schema," which became popular in the late 1970's and early 1980's, emerged out of the Pshycholinguistic-Cognitive view of literacy, where language and thought work together to achieve comprehension (Goodman, 1988; Johns, 1997). Goodman (1988), the major proponent of this view, explained that reading involved a "psycholinguistic guessing game" of the brain (Samuels and Kamil, 1988). By accessing background knowledge in the memory, the reader attempts to make meaning of the text (Dubin, Eskey, and Grabe, 1986). The different types of background knowledge critical to such meaning making are known as schemata.

According to Johns (1997), readers employ the use of their content and formal schemata from past experiences and texts in order to comprehend the text they are

reading. Schema theory, according to James (1987), describes a process that involves matching language input to the reader's preexisting knowledge. When the reader cannot find an accurate match for this input, or finds an incorrect match, the reader's comprehension process is hindered.

L2 schema reading researchers have proposed that readers bring a combination of different kinds of knowledge to the text. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) have divided these schemata along formal, content, and linguistic dimensions.

Formal schemata refer to the rhetorical and organizational knowledge readers have about texts (Carrell, 1983). Similarly, Aebersold and Field (1997) explain that "the knowledge that you bring to a text about structure, vocabulary, grammar, and level of formality (or register) constitutes your formal schema" (p. 17). Every reader has certain expectations and assumptions about how different text genres are organized and structured. For example, as described in Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), the schema for a simple story would include the concepts of "a setting, a beginning, a development, and an ending"

(p. 560). Readers integrate their previous reading experience of similar stories in order to predict and understand the text. Thus, L2 reading scholars have argued that formal schemata is crucial for helping L2 readers understand texts because they can better predict the events and ideas in the story (Aebersold and Field, 1997; Carrell, 1988; James, 1987).

Whereas formal schemata involve text structure, content schemata constitute the background knowledge the reader has about the topic and ideas in the text (James, 1987). Content schemata vary largely from person to person and are culturally determined (Floyd and Carrell, 1987). A reader's background knowledge of the content and cultural schemata of a text has been argued to significantly improve his or her comprehension (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). According to James (1987), "Studies show that readers comprehend more of a text if: (a) They are already familiar with the topic from experience; (b) they have read something about the topic before; and (c) they know in advance what the reading concerns" (pg. 178). Thus, comprehension of the text is

enhanced when the readers relate the content of the text to their own knowledge.

The third type, linguistic schemata, comprises the knowledge a person has about the language (e.g. phonology, morphology, and syntax). Readers need to be able to recognize words and grammatical structures in order to comprehend the text, along with giving those words meaning from their own background knowledge (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) state that "efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge. Comprehending words, sentences, and entire texts involves more than just relying on one's linguistic knowledge" (p. 557).

Schema research has emphasized the importance of all three types of schemata in readers' comprehension of texts. Mikulecky (1990), an L1 reading researcher, explains that "the reader constructs the meaning of the text by interpreting textual information in the light of prior knowledge and experience" (p. 3). Spires, Gallini, and Riggsbee (1991) illustrate "that prior knowledge can

act as a frame of reference within which new information can be processed more readily" (p. 308).

This process of activating appropriate frames of reference proves to be more difficult when a reader is operating in a second language because the reader may not have the cultural and genre-specific schema necessary for interpreting the text. For example, a L2 learner might not be familiar with either the rhetorical style (formal schemata) or the topic (content schemata) of a text. Therefore, the L2 reader will not have adequate background knowledge for the text to interact with, which will inhibit his or her comprehension of the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983).

INTERACTIVE MODEL

While schema scholarship has been concerned specifically with a reader's background knowledge, the interactive model extends schema research by examining the entire reading process. The interactive model is concerned with different text processing mechanisms, how readers use various schemata, and how both of these factors interact during the reading process. During the

reading process, the reader is involved in two kinds of processing. James (1987) refers to these processes as "bottom-up" and "top-down" (p. 178). Eskey and Grabe (1988) describe these processes as "metaphors for the complex mental process of reading, *top* here referring to such 'higher' order mental concepts as the knowledge and expectations of the reader, and *bottom* to the physical text on the page" (p. 223). Proponents of the interactive model have integrated these two processes together, resulting in the interactive model of reading. The interactive model is described as a "process of formulating and verifying hypotheses based upon the interaction of information from independent sources, each pertaining to a particular aspect of reading (knowledge of features, letters, letter clusters, words, syntax, and semantics)" (Jones, 1982, p. 773).

Bottom-up processes are ones whereby a reader constructs meaning by progressing from the smallest to the most complex units (from letters to words to sentences to paragraphs, etc.) (Dubin, Eskey, and Grabe, 1986). James (1987) further describes this process as one that "involves the movement of data from the page to the brain"

where the reader's memory is then activated to find a related past experience with the text (p. 178). The bottom-up process starts when the reader receives incoming data and then continues the process of trying to find and match the best schemata (linguistic, content, or formal) from which they can decode and interpret the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). Readers, therefore, decode the text and find preexisting schemata to help them comprehend the text.

While bottom-up processing is initiated by the incoming data from the text, top-down processing begins when readers approach a text and try to fit the text into their preexisting knowledge (cultural, syntactic, linguistic, and historical) (Aebersold and Field, 1997). According to Carrell and Eisterhold (1987), top-down processing "occurs as the system makes general predictions based on higher level, general schemata and then searches the input for information to fit into these partially satisfied, higher order schemata (p. 557). In this process, therefore, a reader's background knowledge interacts with the text in order to form some level of comprehension.

According to the interactive model, these two processes work simultaneously and help the reader obtain optimal comprehension of the text by searching for schemata in the reader's memory that matches the data from the text (Aebersold and Field, 1997). A reader must decode the linguistic aspects of the text, as well as initiate the process of retrieving and activating the various kinds of schemata in order to comprehend the text. Prior knowledge of linguistic structures is used in order to recognize the letters, words, and sentences of the text. In addition, prior knowledge of the content and discourse structure is used to interpret the meaning of the text. It is this process of retrieving prior knowledge (top-down processing) that many poor L2 readers do not utilize enough (Eskey, 1988).

A number of applications for teaching L2 reading have emerged from schema and interactive theories of text processing. Some of these applications will be considered in relation to both ESL and ASL readers in the next section.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE INTERACTIVE MODEL AND SCHEMA THEORY FOR SECOND-LANGUAGE READING

L2 researchers have applied the concepts and principles from schema theory and the interactive model in applications for the teaching of reading to L2 students. Many of these techniques and methodologies focus on helping students to activate and retrieve different kinds of schema. They also demonstrate how to improve the way readers interact with the text before, during, and after reading in order to increase their comprehension.

Pre-Reading Activities

According to both schema theory and the interactive model, it is important for readers to be able to match the text to their preexisting knowledge. Therefore, it is important to help readers begin to activate the appropriate content and formal schemata *before* they even start reading.

Activating content schema is essential for the L2 student, especially if there is culturally-bound knowledge in the text. Introducing and discussing the text before reading helps readers to recall anything they might already know about the ideas, words, or concepts in the

text. Aebersold and Field (1997) propose that students can use a technique called brainstorming, where the students remember and call out words and ideas about the topic from their own experience and knowledge. Other pre-reading activities they suggest are written assignments about the topic, field trips or role-plays related to the topic, word association activities, prediction activities, content mapping, and semantic mapping. Content mapping is an activity where the students write down anything they know about the topic and then later underline any matching ideas as they read the text. Similarly, semantic mapping involves students brainstorming words related to a specific word or idea by drawing a map of how these words are related.

Providing opportunities for students to activate their preexisting knowledge about a topic gives them a purpose for reading, aids in the comprehension process, and prompts the students to develop predictions about the text (Aebersold and Field, 1997). Aebersold and Field (1997) explain that "if the students keep this knowledge in mind as they read, they increase their opportunities to make sense of the information they find in the text" (p.

67). In support of the idea of activating and building background knowledge, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) argue that "providing background information and previewing content for the reader seem to be the most obvious strategies for the language teacher. We want to avoid having students read material 'cold.' Asking students to manipulate both the linguistic and cultural codes (sometimes linguistically easy but culturally difficult, and vice versa) is asking too much" (p. 567). Previewing and discussing key ideas in the text may also provide an opportunity to address new vocabulary or certain culturally-bound ideas in the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983).

By giving students a purpose for reading and helping them connect knowledge they already have to the text, the student is likely to be more motivated to read the text. In addition, teachers can lower students' affective filter and social distance through many of these pre-reading activities as they help the students relate the text to their own personal experience and knowledge. Thus, pre-reading activities such as these can make the text seem less intimidating to L2 students.

In the pre-reading phase, as well as during the reading of the text itself, it is helpful to encourage the students to predict events and concepts in the story (Eskey, 1986). Prediction exercises can be done through class or group discussion, written questions, or by previewing. According to Aebersold and Field (1997), "Previewing introduces various aspects of the text, helps readers predict what they are going to read, and gives them a framework to help make sense of the information" (Aebersold and Field, 1997). Prediction can also take place during the reading process as the student guesses what will happen next. By engaging the students in previewing or other prediction exercises, the teacher can help build the students' prediction skills, which are necessary for higher levels of reading comprehension. Eskey (1986) maintains that as students learn to read at higher levels, they make predictions about the text in ways that help them make meaning out of the text without relying as much on the text itself.

Another method used to help students activate, retrieve, and build content knowledge prior to reading is that of semantic mapping. Semantic mapping involves the

brainstorming of words related to a particular key word or concept. As the students recall related words, the teacher can help to stretch their realm of thinking by using analogies, metaphors, and comparisons (Carrell, 1987). Carrell (1987) explains that such word association tasks are "of particular relevance for second language readers at lower levels of proficiency and with limited vocabularies in the second language, for whom meaning tends to break down at the word level" (p. 246). As a result of this process, students activate, retrieve, and build schema as they interact with the teacher through the semantic map.

In addition to activating readers content schema, it is also important to help them activate and build formal schema before and during the reading process. One study by Carrell (1992) researched the effects of text structure awareness on their reading comprehension. Carrell (1992) found that readers who were more aware of text structure were better able to comprehend and recall the ideas in the text. In another study, Carrell (1985) found that providing explicit instruction about text structure improved ESL students' text recall and comprehension. She

suggested that ESL classrooms could usefully include formal schema building as part of their curriculum.

Other researchers have discussed narrative structure, or "story schema," which can be presented to L2 students prior to reading. Story schema refers to the idea that narratives have a specific and predictable structure by which the reader can anticipate and understand the events in a story. Griffith and Ripich (1988) describe these story structures as "consisting of two main unit types: (a) setting and (b) one or more episodes. Episodes consist of an Initiating Event + an Internal Response + a Plan + an Attempt + a Consequence + a Reaction, in that order" (p. 166). Providing a story schema for the students prior to reading can help them predict the events in the story.

During Reading Activities

In addition to preparing students *before* they read, teachers can help students *as* they read. There are a variety of strategies involving both bottom-up and top-down processes that teachers can introduce to the students in order to improve their comprehension and interaction

with the text. These strategies include noting key words in the text, searching for the main idea and conclusion, relating different ideas in the text to each other, answering guided questions, filling in partial outlines, and locating transition sentences (Aebersold and Field, 1997). For example, students might underline the main idea, topic sentences, and conclusion and then circle transition words/sentences as they read to help them actively locate and remember these parts of the text. Such an activity would require them to use their top-level schema of text organization as well as their bottom-level skills in decoding words and sentence structure. Another activity, filling in a partial outline, is done by giving the students an outline with strategic parts missing, such as all the topic sentence ideas or all the details. This type of activity facilitates students' abilities to understand the structure and key elements of the text.

Post-reading Activities

In order to enhance students' comprehension of the text, teachers can engage the students in post-reading activities that will help them continue to build their

content and formal schemata relevant to the text and to use these schemata to help them interpret the text. The most obvious strategy is for students to review the text and their understanding of its ideas and organization (Aebersold and Field, 1997). Review of the text can take place by asking comprehension questions, retelling the story, writing a summary, and expanding the knowledge from the text in a writing assignment (Aebersold and Field, 1997). When students can be given written or verbal comprehension questions to answer, both text and experience type of questions should be asked at this part of the process.

One activity for narrative texts, retelling the story, can be done in a variety of ways. For example, students can retell the story verbally or in written form, or they can create a play or write a book review for other creative ways to retell the story. Merritt and Liles (1989) found that it was beneficial to provide the students with a story model (similar to story maps) which explained the story structure, as well as to have them generate and retell the story. As the students recall the story, the teacher points out the events' relationships to

the story structure. This process helps the student to activate and build their formal schemata about the text. According to Griffith and Ripich (1988), "Story recall involves the listener's past experiences, knowledge of subject matter, familiarity with the structure of the text, and knowledge of the language" (p. 43). By using story recall, teachers can help students build their content and formal schema as it relates to the topic and genre of the text.

Thus, post-reading activities provide an opportunity for the teacher to help the student relate the text to their own experiences and continue to build their content and formal schema, so that the student will more likely be motivated in further reading activities.

Other methods, such as the Experience Text Relationship Method (ETR), also address ways to help students better comprehend the text throughout the reading process. ETR, a type of metacognitive strategy training, was developed in response to schema research. Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989) experimented with ETR in order to help ESL students through the process of activating, retrieving, and building content knowledge as they read

for meaning. They describe this method as one involving discussion between the teacher and student in three steps: before (experience step), during (text step), and after (relationship) the reading of the text.

In the ETR method, before the student reads the text, the teacher engages the student in a discussion about the student's preexisting knowledge of the text. According to Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989), "This is important not only because the students activate any relevant prior background they may have and begin to relate it to the text to be read, but also because the experience step provides a motivation for reading the text" (p. 654). This step may provide a means to giving students more motivation to read--especially if the particular text is carefully chosen to relate to the students.

During the text step, the student reads the text, usually a page or two at a time, with the teacher asking comprehension questions about the content at each interval. This question and answer time gives the teacher an opportunity to make sure the student understands the text, as well as correct any misunderstandings the student may have about the text. After the student finishes

reading, the teacher engages the student in the relationship step. According to Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989), this step is used "to help the students draw relationships between the content of the text (as developed in the *text* step), and their outside experience and knowledge" (p. 654). This step may also help in increasing the motivation of L2 students, as they will achieve greater satisfaction from reading texts if they feel it has some relevance to their lives. In all, this method allows the teacher to guide the students into a deeper understanding of the text by having the student consistently connect their background knowledge with the text.

As suggested earlier, text structure may also be important to teach at different phases of the reading process. Some first and second-language literacy scholars have discussed the idea of teaching text structure in terms of teaching "genres" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Swales, 1990). Like ETR, genre instruction may be useful at pre-during and post-reading stages. Texts typically fall into various genres, such as report, narrative, description, etc., depending on their social purpose.

Within these genres, there is a predictable formal schemata that can be followed. Cope and Kalantzis (1993) define genres as social processes where texts follow predictable patterns according to their social purpose. They also argue that knowledge of how to use genres gives a person social power in society. In light of this, teaching genres to ESL and ASL students could be argued to help increase their motivation by giving them social power, something which they often feel they lack.

Genre proponents argue that when students become competent in recognizing the structures and purposes involved in a particular genre, they increase their background knowledge with which they approach reading and writing the text. By doing so, students will have more confidence and motivation to read and write, thus improving academic success. Emphasis on genre features can have benefits at various points in the reading process (Hewings and Henderson, 1987, Hyon, 1996, forthcoming). Hewings and Henderson (1987) found that providing ESL university students with information about the organization of economics bank review articles prior to reading improved their subsequent understanding of these

texts. Hyon (forthcoming) also discusses how she encouraged students to use genre cues during timed reading exercises to help them hone in on key information in newspaper and research article texts. After reading, students can also respond to the text by writing about a similar topic in the same genre or discourse structure. Thus, teachers can utilize writing to improve reading comprehension through written story retellings, journals, and compositions, which reflect either the formal or content schema of the text.

The genre approach enhances reading by helping students to actively think about structure of the texts they read. This leads to a greater awareness of text structure, so as to add to the building of their formal schemata.

CONCLUSION

Because little research has been done relating to teaching reading as an L2 to ASL students, ESL research can inform teachers of ASL students as to ways to improve their students' literacy skills and to bridge the existing social distance between the ASL student and English texts.

As discussed in Chapter 3, ASL students have similar needs as ESL students, and thus the applications of schema theory and the interactive model can benefit ASL students. Both groups of students lack a certain amount of content and formal background knowledge and thus will benefit by the suggested pre, during, and post-reading activities. The techniques and strategies outlined at the end of this chapter have been successful with ESL students and can prove beneficial with ASL students. In order to gain a sense of some current approaches used to teach English reading to ASL students, I observed and analyzed the reading methods used in a reading class for deaf students and made recommendations as to how some ESL reading teaching strategies could be applied in the deaf classroom context; the next section, therefore, presents these observations and analyses.

CHAPTER 5: OBSERVATIONS OF A READING CLASSROOM FOR HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In order to evaluate what kinds of methods are currently being used in the English instruction of deaf students, as well as to suggest ways to add to the teaching methods in deaf education, I observed a teacher of deaf students for three weeks at the beginning of the term. Although this is just a single case study, the observations can shed some light on how ASL students can best be taught reading skills.

During the three weeks, I remained an observer without interacting with the students; and I took notes on all of the teacher's verbal, written, and signed instruction. My goal was to discover if the teacher's practices reflected any of the current reading theories and teaching methods that were discussed in the previous chapter. Her classroom was a special education classroom in a public high school that combined both deaf and learning disabled students in the same class. In contrast to previous centuries, public schools now educate a large percentage of the deaf and hard-of-hearing population. According to Davis, Shepard, Stelmachowics, and Gorga (1981) "The majority of children with educationally

significant hearing losses are no longer found in residential schools for the deaf. Moores (1978) reported that more than 50% of all hearing-impaired children are now being educated in public schools" (p. 130). Thus, the classroom situation I observed was a typical learning environment for ASL students.

This class was chosen because it was the only high-school English class for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the local public school district. The teacher focused on teaching English skills (reading, writing, and grammar) for most of the time that I observed, but she also spent time reviewing math and social study skills. I observed and recorded her activities and teaching related to the teaching of English skills only.

METHOD

Subjects

The teacher was an experienced Special Education teacher for high school-aged students; she had worked in this capacity for over 25 years in the same school district. She holds a degree in Special Education and is thus informed about the specific learning needs of deaf

and hard-of-hearing (HH) students. The teacher used the simultaneous method of sign; that is, she signed and spoke at the same time in order to communicate with both hearing and deaf students in her class. Her sign language was a combination of ASL and Signing Exact English.

There were seventeen students (from ninth to twelfth grade) in the class one to two periods each day. Students who needed more support came into the class for two periods a day. Among the seventeen students, seven were deaf or hard-of-hearing (HH) and the other ten students had various learning disabilities but no hearing problems. My observations focused on the teacher's methods of instruction with the deaf and HH students, although most of the time all of the students were given the same instruction and materials. All of the students were mainstreamed for the remainder of their classes, some receiving additional support, such as interpreters or tutors.

Materials

I took notes on all of the teacher's verbal and signed instruction, as well as copied all of the handouts

given to the students in class. In addition, I took notes on verbal and signed interactions between the teacher and the students during all classroom activities, including the reading sessions. Finally, I collected writing samples of the students' written responses to their reading assignments.

FINDINGS FROM THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

After observing the teacher for three weeks, I ascertained that she did use some of the current ESL reading instructional methodologies, such as activation of content knowledge, ETR, and post-reading writing activities. In the following section, I discuss the techniques and activities the teacher used for the pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading stages, highlighting elements of her instruction which reflected ESL applications of schema theory and the interactive model. Although she did use some methods that I have discussed, there are many applications of the reading theories and teaching methods discussed in Chapter 4 that could also be utilized in the deaf ESL classroom to improve reading skills and reading comprehension.

Pre-reading Activities

The reading unit I observed centered around reading an adapted screenplay called *No Greater Gift* by Josef Anderson (see Appendix A). Before students read the text, the instructor engaged students in a discussion which elicited connections between the content of the text and the students' prior knowledge. Attention was also paid to building vocabulary and content knowledge that would be important for reading the text.

Much of the pre-reading discussion took the form of the teacher asking questions about concepts or vocabulary words connected to the text, the students responding, and the teacher elaborating on the student responses. On the first day, the instructor introduced the text, explaining that it was a true story about two boys, one who needed a kidney transplant. Then she showed the students an article with a picture in the local newspaper that talked about a boy who donated an organ to his sister. The teacher asked the students if they had heard of this story. Many of the students had heard about this situation since it was happening in their community. This local story seemed to get the interest of many of the

students and helped to activate their background knowledge about donors and transplants. Some of the students made comments about what they knew of the situation from the newspaper.

At that point, the teacher asked the students what the word "donor" meant. A couple of the students raised their hands and knew the meaning. The teacher reinforced their definitions with her own and then proceeded to draw a chart on the board. This chart had the nationalities represented by her students written on the board:

Hispanic, Asian, White, and Black. She then asked the students if they knew how many people in each nationality donate organs. The students were not sure, so she put one check in the Hispanic, Asian, and Black columns and three checks in the White column. Pointing to the chart, she remarked how much less the minority nationalities donate and thus how difficult it was for people in these groups to find a donor match. Then, the students discussed their experiences of hearing about people asking for donations, especially those of minority groups. One hearing student commented, "Yeah, I heard about some Mexican lady cop who needed to find a donor." Not only did this gain the

students' interest in the story, but it also began to build the students' background knowledge about donating organs.

Following this discussion, the teacher gave the students their spelling words for the week (see Appendix B), all given within the contexts of sentences in the story, *No Greater Gift*. She instructed the students to copy the first four sentences in their lists and said that they would have a quiz on the sentences at the end of the week. This copying activity engages the students in bottom-up processing as they build knowledge of sentence structure and improve automatic word recognition. After this, she handed out copies of the story to the students. She then asked the students to look at the story as she asked what the two boys' names were. The students quickly scanned the story and called out their names, "Keith and Nick."

Next, the teacher informed the students that they were going to talk about the setting and characters in the story. In doing this, she followed some of the ideas proposed in teaching story schema. She discussed the meaning of "characters" and talked about the characters in

the story. At first, students defined characters as "people." To clarify the meaning of characters, she asked if a character could be a robot, animal, plant, or even a chair. The students responded with mixed answers, so the teacher affirmed that characters could be almost anything. She gave the example of the movie *Toy Story* in order to demonstrate that even toys could be characters. Transitioning back to the story, she emphasized that the characters Nick and Keith were real/non-fiction.

From there, she asked the students about the meaning of "setting." One student responded by saying that setting is the background. Another student gave the example of "the city," to which she affirmed that was an example of the "where" part of setting. She continued the discussion of what was included in setting (where, when, and why), and students piped up with various ideas when she asked for examples of different settings. For example, one student offered the idea of a movie with a time machine in the future to describe the "when" part of the setting.

While some students worked on their spelling sentences, others went to the Listening Center. All of

the students completed both tasks at some point in the class period. At the Listening Center, they listened to the recording of the spelling sentences while orally repeating the sentences with the tape. The deaf and HH students would turn up the tape as loud as necessary, but the profoundly deaf students probably did not hear much of the tape. As a follow-up, a speech pathologist would come in to work with the deaf students on the sentences and other related speaking exercises one to two times a week.

The teacher also had the students practice recognizing their spelling words by doing a word search of their spelling words (finding their spelling words hidden among random letters). In addition, she helped the students study for their spelling quiz each week by holding a spelling bee between two teams. Then, on the test day, after they completed the test, she would hold a competition of question basketball (if the team answered a question or spelled a word correctly, they could attempt to make two baskets for points).

Analysis and Recommendations for Pre-reading Activities

The pre-reading activities in this classroom reflected some of those recommended by ESL reading researchers for building students' content and linguistic knowledge and for preparing them to use both top-down and bottom-up processes as they read. The spelling and vocabulary activities somewhat helped the students to perform bottom-up activities by engaging the students in word recognition. In addition, the discussion questions enabled the students to engage in top-down processing as they begin to prepare to interpret the text. However, additional activities could be included to prepare students for reading the text during the pre-reading phase (a period of about one week).

As already discussed, the teacher approached the text by first introducing it to the students and asking pre-reading questions about the content of the text (transplants and donors). This type of warm-up activity follows James' (1987) advice that "readers comprehend more of a text if...they know in advance what the reading concerns" (p. 178). Therefore, James (1987) argues, the teacher should "provide the necessary context for that

specific reading task," so that the students will be able to start activating and retrieving their content schemata about the topic (p. 183). In the case of this classroom, the students did indeed begin to discuss their previous knowledge of the ideas in the story, especially as they discussed the local newspaper article on one young donor.

The teacher also activated content and vocabulary knowledge by giving the students spelling words and sentences from the story. This activity also developed their bottom-up process of decoding the text by promoting the movement of data from the text to their brain (James, 1987). However, the teacher could have also used semantic or content mapping to further activate content knowledge with the vocabulary and spelling words. That is, students could have taken key vocabulary words and drawn web-like maps of all the related ideas and words they already knew to continue activating their background knowledge of those ideas. They could have also tried content mapping, where they would have thought of ideas and words related to the topic and then underlined them when they saw those words in the text. This would not only have built top-level

content schemata, but it also would have improved bottom-up skills of automatic word recognition.

By activating content schema through pre-reading questions and exercises about the text's content and vocabulary, the teacher employed some aspects of Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto's metacognitive approach (ETR) (1989). In some respects, the teacher related the story to the students' experiences and background knowledge by having them discuss their knowledge of the local news story and their knowledge of blood donation. However, she could have taken this experience a step further by encouraging a discussion about the students' own personal experiences of cancer and terminal illnesses, as well as their opinions about organ donation, so as to provide the students with more personal connections to the text.

Moreover, the pre-reading stage would have provided a perfect opportunity to enhance the students' prediction skills, which was not done in this class. According to Carrell (1988), students can be taught how to better predict the content of texts by "revealing a text in small chunks (either sentence by sentence, or clause by clause) and asking readers to predict the substance of what will

come next" (p. 249). In this classroom, the teacher could have put the text on an overhead and revealed Mario's first line and then have had the students guess how Nick would have responded. This type of activity could have continued throughout the scene or text.

Another means to improve students' prediction capabilities is by supplying the students with the first part of the text and then asking them to guess what will happen (Carrell, 1988). By giving the students the first four scenes of the text, they could then attempt to guess what might happen and how the story might end.

Although the teacher did activate the students' content schema, it would have also been useful to ask questions that would have further activated the students' formal schemata or story schema. Perhaps the teacher could have introduced the common elements of a story schema (the setting, the beginning, the development, and the end) (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). Although she discussed part of the story schema (setting and characters), she could have also discussed the structure of the story as it occurred in episodes. By explaining the common model of an episode (where there is usually an

initiating event, an internal response from the characters, a plan, an attempt, a consequence, and a reaction), she could have prepared the students to look for these types of events in the text (Merritt and Liles, 1989). If the students are aware of the story structure the text reflects, they will be more likely to be able to predict events and ideas in the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983).

During Reading Activities

Throughout the reading of the text, the teacher asked the students guided comprehension questions, although she did not engage the students in many other ways. After the pre-reading phase, the teacher had the students read the story individually and again in a group session. During the group session, each student was assigned to read aloud a character from the story. The deaf and HH students signed at the same time as they spoke (although some of their speech was unrecognizable). As the hearing students read, the teacher signed what they were saying for the deaf and HH students.

Periodically, the teacher stopped the reading and asked comprehension questions about the text. Usually, the students understood most of the questions. However, when they misinterpreted the text, the teacher took the opportunity to ask more questions that led them to the correct answer. After the students read his or her assigned passage individually, they were all supposed to answer questions about the text (see Appendix C). When the students had difficulty in answering a question, they met individually with the teacher. During these individual meetings, she read the relevant section of the text to the student and asked questions about it in order to direct him or her to the answer.

Analysis and Recommendations for During Reading Activities

Although the instructor used certain elements of the ETR method, she did not use other reading methods helpful in the reading process, such as searching for the main idea and conclusion, or filling in partial outlines.

During the actual reading of the text, the teacher employed the use of the text step from the ETR method, where she asked questions about the story after reading

short passages of the text. Some of her questions asked the student to find an overt answer in the text (using bottom-up processing to decode the text); whereas, other questions compelled the student to interpret the text (using top-down processing to interpret the text in the context of their own background knowledge). One such example of the kinds of questions asked by the teacher occurred as the students were reading Scene 10. First, she asked a bottom-up type of question:

Teacher: Why was he [Nick] mad at his dad?

Student: His dad is not always there.

Teacher: Right, but that's one reason, but there's more.

Student: He can't talk to his dad about giving.

Teacher: What happened to his mother?

Student: She died.

Then she asked a top-down type of question that required the students to interpret the text from their existing knowledge.

Teacher: Why is Nick angry?

Student: Mom died and Father is never around.

At this point, the teacher asked a question that forced the students to develop a relationship between the text and their own experience outside of the text (the third step in ETR).

Teacher: What's a work-a-holic?

Student: Someone who's always working.

Although the teacher asked a good relationship stage question, she did not follow it up by asking how it related to the text. Throughout the questioning process, this was the only relationship stage question that she asked. Thus, it would be advantageous to use more of these types of questions in order to provide more opportunities for the students to interact with the text and build content knowledge to improve comprehension and increase motivation. Asking relationship and experience types of questions also engages the student in top-level processing of interpreting the text through their own experience and knowledge. For example, after reading Scene 6, she could have asked how the student would have felt if they had found out they had a disease like Nick or Keith. Another relationship question, such as "Would you donate your organs to save a friend's life?" could have been asked after Scene 8.

Additional activities, such as locating the main idea and conclusion or completing partial outlines, could have helped students in both bottom-up and top-down processing. By noting key words, students would have practiced their

bottom-up skill of automatic word recognition. Searching for the main ideas, on the other hand, would have engaged their top-level interpretive skills. They would have then been able to use the top-down process when searching for the main idea or the conclusion.

Post-reading Activities

After reading the text individually and in groups, the teacher assigned various written assignments in response to the text. One such assignment was a journal, where the students were supposed to draw a picture about the story and then write about what they had read (see Appendix D). In response to this assignment, all of the students wrote a basic summary of each the events in the story. None of the students merged their own experience or background knowledge with any of the text, such as the example in Appendix D written by a deaf student. When the students were asked to draw a picture relating to the story, this prompted some of the students to be creative about their knowledge of and experience with the text, such as one student's drawing of Keith confronting Nick

about his stealing; however, one student merely traced one of the pictures from the text.

Another assignment asked the students write a crossword poem and a Haiku poem about the story (see the teacher model in Appendix E). Again, the students were able to be somewhat creative, but none of them included any personal experience or integrated previous background knowledge about the topic. Finally, when the students finished reading, they were given a cloze poem taken from the story and were asked to fill it in with their own ideas (see Appendix F). She emphasized that they should use the same word structure, for example to replace a verb with a verb or a noun with a noun. This assignment allowed for the most interaction between the students own linguistic background knowledge and the text. However, the cloze poems did not include many ideas from the text itself.

Analysis and Recommendations for Post-reading Activities

With the post-reading exercises, the teacher also attempted to have the students interact with the text on a content level through some of the writing assignments.

The exercises, such as the summary assignment, did provide the students with an opportunity to recall or retell the text, as recommended by Morrow (1984). Although story retelling has mostly been used to assess students' comprehension of a text, Morrow states that "retelling stories is another active procedure that may aid comprehension and sense of story structure" (p. 95). Not only can retelling a story help the students perceive and understand the story structure, but it can also help their comprehension of the text (Morrow, 1984).

Griffith and Ripich (1988) also found that deaf students can benefit from story schema, but they tend to have problems with it as the story becomes more complex. However, they also found that deaf students' comprehension improved when pictures relating to the structure of the story were used, thus demonstrating that pictures can be a useful tool for activating and building background knowledge, especially for deaf students, who benefit greatly from visual cues. However, in this classroom, in order to deepen students' comprehension of the story, the summary assignment should have also encouraged students to relate the text to their own experiences. Additionally,

explicit instruction of the story structure would have helped to build students' understanding of the story as well as other narratives.

In addition to the written assignments given to the students, there are other ways to help the students. For instance, it would have been advisable for the teacher to give assignments that engaged students in retelling through sign language, such as in a role-play activity. In a role play activity, each student becomes one of the characters and together they act out and speak (through sign, if necessary) one or more scenes of the story in their own words. By allowing the students to use sign language, they can be unhindered in focusing on the elements and structure of the story. Students could have also written the role-play scripts first as an additional assignment. Merritt and Liles (1989) propose that the process of story retelling and story generation activate a story schema in the student's mind. This activity could further build the students' formal schema of story structure. Therefore, students could have also been asked to generate their own story in the same genre after the instructor had discussed the previous story's structure.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

In my assessment, I believe that this teacher and all teachers of ASL students should further investigate the theories and methods for teaching reading to ESL students to examine their possible applications to their own classrooms. Examining the limitations of deaf education in the past should motivate educators of today to constantly reevaluate their current methods of instruction and adapt new theories or findings that relate to their classroom situations. ESL research has brought many important insights to the field of teaching English literacy skills. Now that it has been established that ASL students are indeed L2 students, educators should incorporate L2 theories and their applications in the teaching of the ASL student. Schema theory and the interactive model can also provide reading teachers of the deaf with innovative and effective ways to teach literacy skills to ASL students. Although many of the theories would need to be adapted in order to be used with a deaf population, many of the principles underlying the theories could serve to inform those involved in making decisions about the current teaching practices of the deaf.

Further research and inquiry into the application of ESL reading methodology is necessary to adequately demonstrate to what extent and in what ways the theories can be applied to ASL classrooms. This thesis only provides a preliminary outline of how these applications could be used in the ASL classroom. Thus, more experimental studies are needed in order to fully assess the validity of ESL methodologies for teaching ASL students. Because the observations in this thesis focused on teaching the reading of narrative texts, more work is needed on how ESL applications can be used to help ASL students read other genres. In addition, I would recommend examining the validity of ESL reading methods with other students in the deaf population, those whose first language may not be ASL. It would also be useful to look into other areas of ESL teaching, such as writing and grammar, to see how they could be applied to the teaching of deaf students. Overall, though, the present findings suggest that ESL reading applications from schema theory and the interactive model can provide effective principles and strategies for teaching reading to deaf students.

APPENDIX A: "NO GREATER GIFT" BY JOSEF ANDERSON

Characters Nick Santos Mario Santos, <i>Nick's father</i> Keith Dr. Lewis Narrator
--

This play is
based
on a true story

SCENE 1

NARRATOR: It is early in the morning; NICK enters his apartment and tiptoes past his father's bedroom.

Someone grabs him from behind.

MARIO: Where have you been all night?

NICK: What do you care?

MARIO: I want you here when I get home tonight.

NICK: Can't. I've got some business to take care of.

MARIO: What am I going to do with you?

NICK: Nothing. Just like always.

NARRATOR: Mario grabs Nick's arm.

MARIO: If you keep hanging out with those guys, you're going to end up on jail.

NICK: I'll do OK, as long as I don't grow up like you!

NARRATOR: Mario pushes Nick onto his bed. Nick picks up a chair, ready to swing.

NICK: You want to hit me? Well, come on!

MARIO: (*quietly*) I'm sorry.

NICK: Come on! Hit me!

MARIO: Nick, stop! I'm sorry!

NARRATOR: Suddenly, Nick drops the chair, grabs his head, and screams. He reaches for his father.

MARIO: Nick?

NARRATOR: Nick collapses in his father's arms.

SCENE 2

NARRATOR: A few hours later, Mario is sitting in the hospital waiting room. Dr. Lewis walks in.

DR. LEWIS: Mr. Santos? I'm Dr. Lewis.

MARIO: What's wrong with him.

DR. LEWIS: We're not sure yet.

MARIO: Does he have something serious?

DR. LEWIS: I don't know. I'd like to run some tests in the morning. He's resting now, if you want to look in on him.

MARIO: I've got to get to work. I can't afford to lose this job. Money's tight now.

DR. LEWIS: We'll do our best, Mr. Santos.

SCENE 3

NARRATOR: Later that night, Dr. Lewis is in

Keith's room at the hospital.

KEITH: I heard I got a new roommate.

DR. LEWIS: Yes. Nick Santos. Be nice to him. It's his first time in a hospital.

NARRATOR: Later, Keith is asleep in their room. Nick gets out of bed. He grabs Keith's tape deck and heads for the door. Keith wakes up.

KEITH: Hey, what are doing with my tape deck?

NICK: Nothing, just looking.

KEITH: You were stealing it.

NICK: Are you calling me a thief?

KEITH: Yeah, and not a very good one.

NARRATOR: Keith reaches for his tape deck. Nick pushes him on the bed.

NICK: Nobody calls me a thief.

KEITH: And nobody pushes me around.

NICK: Oh, take it! I just want to get out of here. *(He tosses the tape deck to Keith).*

NARRATOR: Nick grabs his head and cries in pain. He slumps on the floor.

SCENE 4

NARRATOR: Two days later, Mario meets with Dr. Lewis in her office.

MARIO: Maybe your tests are wrong.

DR. LEWIS: Mario, we all agree on the diagnosis. Your son has a serious illness. He could die. It's best to be as honest as we can-with you and with Nick.

MARIO: *(Quietly):* Why do you have to tell him?

DR. LEWIS: Every kid figures it out sooner or later. I'd like you to tell him tomorrow.

MARIO: *(angry):* Tell him what? That he's going to die and there's nothing you can do about it?

DR. LEWIS: We'll do everything we can to save his life.

MARIO: Well, you tell him, because I can't. *(He rushes out of the office).*

SCENE 5

NARRATOR: The next night, Nick sees Keith sneak out of their room. Nick follows him down to the basement. Keith crawls through a vent into a small room. Nick crawls in after him.

KEITH: You followed me! Get out of here. This is my place.

NICK: This is a private club?

KEITH: Get out of here now!

NICK: OK. Take it easy. I'll

leave. Just give me a second.

KEITH: You shouldn't know about this place. Nobody does.

NICK: They do now. *(He looks around. The room is filled with books, toys, blankets, and pillows.)* Did you steal all of this stuff?

KEITH: I'm borrowing it.

NICK: Sure. And you call me a thief. What do you do in here?

KEITH: Hang out. I like to be alone sometimes.

NICK: I know what you mean.

KEITH: You can stay for a while. It's OK.

NICK: Thanks. *(Keith starts writing in a notebook).* What are you writing?

KEITH: I write every time I'm here.

NICK: You must spend a lot of time in the hospital. What's wrong with you?

KEITH: I've got bad kidneys.

NICK: What does the machine next to your bed do?

KEITH: It does what my kidneys would do if they were OK.

NICK: How long will you have that machine?

KEITH: For the rest of my life, unless I get a transplant. Did they find out what's wrong with you?

NICK: I've been getting headaches. It's nothing. I'll be out of here tomorrow. Can I have a cookie?

KEITH: You won't tell anyone about this place?

NICK: You've got my word.

KEITH: What's that worth?

NICK: *(Smiling):* At least two cookies.

SCENE 6

NARRATOR: The next day, Mario and Nick in Dr. Lewis' office.

DR. LEWIS: Nick, do you know what a tumor is?

NICK: A tumor?

DR. LEWIS: Yes. It's a group of cells that are abnormal.

NICK: That's like...cancer, isn't it?

DR. LEWIS: It's a serious illness, and...

NICK: Do you think I'm going to die? Do you?

DR. LEWIS: You could also get better.

MARIO: Sure, he's going to get better. *(He puts his arm around Nick).*

NICK: Nothing's going to happen to me! *(He pushes his father away).*

MARIO: Nick, I want you to listen.

NICK: *(To Mario):* You always wanted to get rid of me. I'm only a kid. You should die, not me!

MARIO: C'mon, Nick.

NICK: Stay away from me! Get out

of my life! I'm not going to die for a long time!

NARRATOR: Nick runs out of the office. Dr. Lewis comforts Mario. Then she goes to look for Nick in his room.

DR. LEWIS: Keith, I can't find Nick. Do you know where he is?

KEITH: I haven't seen him. What'd he do?

DR. LEWIS: He got bad news. He's got a brain tumor.

KEITH: Oh, man...

DR. LEWIS: Do you think you can find him? *(Keith nods)*. I'll wait in my office.

NARRATOR: Keith finds Nick in the basement hideout.

KEITH: I figured you'd be here. *(Nick doesn't look at Keith)*. If you don't come out, they'll search the building. They'll find this place. We

won't have it anymore.

NICK: They said I got this thing growing in my head.

KEITH: I know.

NICK: They said I could die.

KEITH: They've been telling me that since I was eight.

NICK: Were you scared when they told you?

KEITH: Sure. Who wouldn't be? Sometimes I'm still afraid. But now I'm used to it.

NICK: Dying. It's not something I want to do right now, you know?

KEITH: Look, I know that ropes around here. Why don't I stick with you the next few days. I'll make sure they treat you OK.

NICK: I can take care of myself.

KEITH: I know.

NICK: Hey...thanks.

KEITH: C'mon, let's go.

(He leaves, and Nick follows.)

SCENE 7

NARRATOR: For the next few weeks, Nick and Keith stick together. They become good friends. One morning Nick goes to see Dr. Lewis.

NICK: When I die, I'd like to donate my kidneys to Keith.

DR. LEWIS: You'll need your father's consent, Nick.

NICK: Why do we have to tell him? They're my kidneys.

DR. LEWIS: Yes, but there are laws.

NICK: I won't ask him for anything. I don't need him.

DR. LEWIS: Maybe he needs you.

NICK: He's better off without me. He never wanted me around anyway.

DR. LEWIS: Nick, he's having a

hard time now.
I'm sure if you
ask, he'll say
yes.

NICK: I don't
want to talk to
him. You talk
to him.

DR. LEWIS: I'll
try, Nick. But
even if he says
yes, there are
some tests we
have to run.

NICK: Tests?

DR. LEWIS: What
you want to do
might not work.

NICK: It's got
to.

SCENE 8

NARRATOR: One
night a few
weeks later,
Keith and Nick
are in their
hideout.

KEITH: Why are
you looking at
me like that?

NICK: There's
something I want
to tell you...I
feel good.

KEITH: That's
what you wanted
to tell me?

NICK: I feel
good because of
you. I never
had someone like

you, who did
stuff for me.

KEITH: You do
stuff for me,
too.

NICK: Most of my
life I've been
taking things.
If I saw a kid
with something I
wanted, I'd take
it. But now I
can give
something. Just
thinking about
it makes me feel
good.

KEITH: What are
you talking
about?

NICK: When I'm
dead, I want you
to have my
kidneys. I know
you could use
them. Dr. Lewis
ran tests and we
match.

KEITH:
(shocked) You
don't have to do
this.

NICK: I want to.
It makes me feel
like I'm not
just going to
die and
disappear.
Well, don't you
want them?

KEITH: Yeah,
sure. But, uh,
one would be
plenty.

NICK: You've got
to take them
both. I'm going
to break up a
set.

SCENE 9

NARRATOR: Dr.
Lewis tells
Mario that Nick
wants to give
his kidneys to
Keith. Mario
won't give his
permission. She
tells Nick. He
goes to his room
and starts
packing.

KEITH: Where are
you going?

NICK: I don't
know.

KEITH: Mind if I
come with you?
Just for a
while.

NICK: I don't
care.

NARRATOR: Keith
and Nick sneak
out of the
hospital. They
stop at Nick's
house.

KEITH: Isn't
your dad home?

NICK: He never
is. Hurry up!

NARRATOR: They
crawl in through
a window in
Nick's bedroom.

Mario is in the living room, but doesn't come out. He listens.

NICK: *(taking out a baseball from a drawer):* I want you to have this. It's signed by Valenzuela. I caught it.

KEITH: *(reading):* "To Ed, love Fernando"?

NICK: OK, so I stole it from a kid. He moved, so you might as well have it.

KEITH: Thanks.

NICK: *(looking around his room):* I guess things don't always turn out the way you want. I wanted you to have my kidneys because you're the best friend I ever had. It made me feel like I was doing something right. I guess nothing matters, really. It'll be like I was never here at all. *(He*

pauses.) Let's go.

KEITH: Back to the hospital, OK?

NICK: OK.

NARRATOR: They leave, Mario has heard the whole thing.

SCENE 10

NARRATOR: Keith and Nick return to the hospital. Dr. Lewis comes to their room.

DR. LEWIS: Nick, your father is here.

NICK: I don't want to see him.

DR. LEWIS: You might want to thank him. He signed the papers. He gave his consent.

NICK: Why? What happened?

DR. LEWIS: He wants to tell you. He's in my office.

NARRATOR: Nick goes to Dr. Lewis' office.

MARIO: I was wrong... wrong about a lot of things.

NICK: So was I.

MARIO: Why didn't you want to see me?

NICK: I was angry at you. For all the times you weren't there. And I was afraid...

MARIO: So was I. I've never been much of a

father, have I?

NICK: Not since Mom died. But I haven't been much of a son, either.

MARIO: You're the most important thing in the world to me, Nick.

You're all I've got. I'm so proud of what you're doing. I love you.

NICK: I love you, Dad.

MARIO: Whatever you want, you name it.

NARRATOR: A few days later, Nick leads Keith to the roof of the hospital. On the roof is a tent and sleeping bags.

KEITH: Where'd you get this?

NICK: My dad did it for me. For us.

NARRATOR: Keith and Nick have a great time. They finally get into their sleeping bags. Nick can't sleep. He opens his eyes and sees Keith writing.

NICK: What are you writing?

KEITH: Nothing...a poem. Do you want to hear it?

NICK: Sure.

KEITH:

(reading): For Nick, my friend. Someday I'll name a star for you,
One I've found, one that's new. I'll point to it, and see its light.
And think about us here tonight. And if I need some company, I'll just look up and there you'll be,
The brightest star in the galaxy.
The star I'll name for you.

What do you think?

NARRATOR: Nick smiles, and tears roll down his face.

Nick Santos died two weeks later.

APPENDIX B: SPELLING WORDS FROM "NO GREATER GIFT"

1. Nick tiptoes into the room.
2. Mario is serious about the rules.
3. Nick resisted any help from his dad.
4. Nick collapses onto the floor.
5. Nick had a brain tumor.
6. Mario gave Nick his permission.
7. Galaxy is another name for heavens.
8. They stayed in the hospital.
9. Everyone has two kidneys.
10. It was their secret place.
11. Nick wrote a poem.

I. Suffixes

1. -sion, -tion
2. -ous
3. -ure (temperature)
4. -ed (called)

II. Short Vowels

1. a
2. e
3. i
4. o

III. Diphthongs

1. th (the)
2. ch (church)
3. sh (shade)
4. ph (phone)

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS FROM "NO GREATER GIFT"

NO GREATER GIFT

1. I'd like to _____ my _____ to Keith.
2. I can't _____ to lose this job.
3. Nick _____ in his father's arms.
4. He learns about the _____.
5. Are you calling me a _____?
6. Someone _____ him from behind.
7. Nick grabs his head, and cries in _____.
8. Nick enters his apartment and _____ past his father's bedroom.
9. Nick has _____ from people his whole life.
10. You'll need your father's _____.
11. The _____ star in the _____.
12. Nick _____ and _____ roll down his face.
13. They _____ out of the hospital.
14. I'm not just going to die and _____.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. consent | 7. donate | 12. tiptoes |
| 2. kidneys | 8. taken | 13. smiles |
| 3. pain | 9. collapses | 14. afford |
| 4. galaxy | 10. star | 15. tears |
| 5. grabs | 11. thief | 16. sneak |
| 6. disappear | | 17. brightest |
| | | 18. tumor |

I. Match vocabulary

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1. tiptoes | a. to fall down |
| 2. resist | b. cancer (illness) |
| 3. collapse | c. living organ in body |
| 4. thief | d. walk quietly |
| 5. tumor | e. to allow, let |
| 6. permission | f. to fight back |
| 7. galaxy | g. a robber |
| 8. kidneys | h. the universe |

II. Answer the following:

- p. 7 A
1. What is the setting? (time, place, and environment)?
 2. Is this a fiction or nonfiction (true) story?
 - a. Name 2 other fiction stories.
 3. List 4 characters, and who they are.
 4. How old is Nick?
 - a. What is Nick trying to take?
- p. 7 B
5. Why are Nick and Mario (Dad) arguing?
 - a. Nick and Mario understand each other. (T/F)
 6. What happens to Nick?
 7. To where is Nick taken?
- p. 7 C
8. Why does Mario leave the hospital upset?
 9. How does Mario feel? A) Why?
- p. 8 A
10. What does Nick take?
 11. Where is Nick's mother?

32. How does Keith feel about Nick's gift?
- p. 11 A 33. Why does Nick's dad, Mario, finally give his consent (say yes) to signing the papers?
- p. 11 B 34. What does Mario tell Nick?
35. What happened to Nick's mother?
36. Where did the boys spend some time?
37. What did Keith write?
A). Copy the poem.
38. What finally happens to Nick?
A). How will Keith always be a part of Nick?
39. What does the title "No Greater Gift" probably mean? What was the "Gift?"
40. What is an "organ donor?"
41. Can babies donate organs? To whom?

APPENDIX D: STUDENT JOURNAL

"No Greater Gift"

7/16/98
per. 2

Today I read about Narrator which
where find it Nick has outside without
Nick father Nick ~~with his~~ ~~with~~ hit
hurt him away. He was get out
of stoped going to die for a long time.
Nick has two day back him. Nick
I can't get out and the sick Collapass
this body pain thing growing in
my head. Narrator tell him you
meet anything with together Nick.
Narrator this wrong Ask him said
Nick because has good jobs meet
good friend to see Dr. Lewis. Nick
more make we have need be not
Kidneys.



APPENDIX E: HAIKU POEM EXAMPLE

5 / / / / /
Nick is very sick.

7 / / / / / /
with a serious brain tumor

5 / / / / /
Nick and Keith are friends.

APPENDIX F: CLOZE POEM FROM STORY

-
1. For _____, my _____.
 2. Someday I'll name a _____ for _____.
 3. One I've _____, one that's _____.
 4. I'll _____ it, and _____ its _____,
 5. And think about _____ (tonight, morning, noon).
 6. And if I need some _____,
 7. I'll just _____ and there _____ be.
 8. The _____ in the _____.
 9. The _____ I'll name for _____.

For Nick, my friend.

Someday I'll name a star for you,

One day I've found, one that's new.

I'll point to it, and see its light,

And think about us here tonight.

And if I need some company,

I'll just look up and there you'll be.

The brightest star in the galaxy,

The star I'll name for you.

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