

Qualification Specification

Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People

501/0106/7

Sept 2010 – Aug 2011



Signature

Mersey House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham DH1 1TH

Telephone: 0191 383 1155
Textphone: 0191 383 7915
Fax: 0191 383 7914
Email: durham@signature.org.uk
Website: www.signature.org.uk

© Signature May 2010

QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

Signature Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People

(QCF Accreditation Number: 501/0106/7)

Signature Qualification Reference: MET3

Qualification Aim

Signature Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People is suitable for those who wish to work with and for deaf people who may require support in accessing written English.

Learners will be able to recognise structures and discourse in English which can cause particular problems for deaf readers, and be able to modify it so it becomes more accessible without changing the meaning or intent of the original written message.

Qualification Structure

To achieve the full Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People, learners are required to complete two units.

Unit K318 is a theory unit and Unit T303 covers the knowledge and practical skills in English language modification.

Units may be taken separately, but it is recommended that K318 is taken before T303.

The total recommended guided learning hours is 40 hours as shown on the next page.

Signature unit code	QCF unit number	Unit title	Assessment	Unit details
K318	H/601/9363	Accessible English for Deaf and Deafblind People	External: written examination	For full details of this unit see Unit K318 Unit Specification
T303	R/602/0654	Modifying Written Texts for Deaf and Deafblind People	Internal: written assignment and external practical examination	For full details of this unit see Unit T303 Unit Specification



Unit	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study hours	Total Learning Time	Credit Level at Level 3
K318	20	10	30	3
T303	20	10	30	3
Total	40	10	60	6

Target Group

Those who work with and for deaf people who need access to modified English, including trainee teachers of the deaf, communication support workers, support staff within educational establishments.

Progression Routes

On completion of Signature Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People, a range of further qualifications are available, including:

- CACDP Level 3 Certificate in Facilitating Communication with Deaf People (Notetaking Skills) (FNT3)
- CACDP Level 3 Certificate for Language Service Professionals Working with Deaf and Deafblind People (Notetaking) (LNT3)
- Unit K318 is also part of the Signature Level 3 Certificate in Learning Support (Communication Support Worker)

A range of qualifications in the deafblind area is also available.



UNIT SPECIFICATION

Unit K318 – Accessible English for Deaf and Deafblind People

(QCF Accreditation Number: H/601/9363)

This unit aims to develop the learner's knowledge of issues around access to English for deaf and deafblind people, including:

- knowledge of concepts and structures for describing/analysing English
- issues around access to spoken English, and ways of making spoken English accessible
- issues around access to written English, and ways of making written English accessible.

Unit Summary

Unit K318 forms part of the Signature Level 3 Award in Modifying Texts for Deaf People (MET3) and is also part of the Signature Level 3 Certificate in Learning Support (Communication Support Worker).

Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study hours	Total learning time	Credit value at level
20	10	30	3

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner can:
1. Know the key concepts, structures and discourse features used to describe/analyse English	1.1 Identify different structures and grammatical features of spoken and written English 1.2 Summarise the conditions under which children learn language effectively 1.3 Distinguish language variation in terms of register, style, regional variation and influence of other languages



Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner can:
2. Know reasons and techniques for making spoken English accessible for deaf and deafblind people	2.1 Analyse the factors that affect the deaf/deafblind person's access to spoken English 2.2 Explain and evaluate ways of producing spoken language in an accessible form for deaf and deafblind people
3. Know reasons and techniques for making written English accessible for deaf and deafblind people	3.1 Analyse the factors that affect the deaf/deafblind person's access to written English 3.2 Evaluate ways of producing written language in an accessible form for deaf and deafblind people

Topic Content

A. Concepts and structures for describing and analysing English

- Features which all languages share.
- Language variation and change.
- Conditions under which children learn language effectively.
- Key structures and discourse features of English.

B. Issues around access to spoken English. Ways of making spoken English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

- Development of spoken language and communication in deaf and deafblind children.
- Speech movements/sounds which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind lipreaders/speechreaders.
- Ways of making spoken language accessible for deaf and deafblind people.

C. Issues around access to written English. Ways of making written English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

- Development of written language in deaf and deafblind children.
- Features of written English which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind people.
- Ways of making written language accessible for deaf and deafblind people.



ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Please read this specification in conjunction with Signature Assessment Regulations and Signature General Regulations on our website.

Assessment for this unit will take the form of a one hour written* assessment paper, containing a number of questions eliciting knowledge and understanding of topics covered in the unit.

One of the questions will include a short piece of written text. Candidates will be asked to explain why this text might be difficult for a deaf reader. Candidates will use the content and/or layout of the text to illustrate their answers.

The pass mark is 50%.

The papers will be externally marked by Signature assessors.

*Through reasonable adjustment requests, arrangements may be made for candidates to access this assessment through British Sign Language.



APPENDIX – NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Learner Background

1. Although it is not essential, learners will benefit from having achieved Signature Level 1 Award in Deaf Awareness and Communication.
2. A qualification showing sound knowledge and command of English will be a distinct advantage. These could include:
 - GCSE or IGCSE English – Grade C or above.
 - Key Skills Communication Level 2.
 - O Level English Language.
 - AS Level English Language.
 - A Level English Language.
 - Communications Unit at Level 2 or 3 in a kitemarked Access to Higher Education course.
 - Scottish Certificate of Education – Standard Grade English – Grade C or above.
 - Scottish Certificate of Education – Higher Grade English – Grade D or above.
 - Irish Leaving Certificate – Ordinary Level English – Grade C or above.
 - Irish Leaving Certificate – Higher Level English – Grade D or above.

If an applicant has an English qualification other than the above, or no formal qualification in English, s/he could be offered the opportunity to take a Level 3 Key Skills Communication Skills test, which takes 1.5 hours and tests writing as well as reading. Tests and mark schemes are on the website: <http://tinyurl.com/yb5qmv>.

3. An important aim of this unit is to allow learners to become familiar with relevant concepts in language for a better understanding of how deaf people access English. Candidates will not be expected to be able to use the specified grammatical features of English without error. Rather, they will be expected to have an awareness of the main structures and discourse features of English.



Teacher Background

Individuals with a good knowledge of English language are likely to have the necessary knowledge and background to teach this unit.

It would be an advantage if the teacher was a:

- teacher of the Deaf
- deaf teacher
- teacher with a Certificate for Adult Literacy
- teacher of English Language.

Delivery Strategies

1. It may be useful to provide potential learners with a pre-course task, for example reading and practical exercises, to confirm their ability to cope with the course.
2. A diverse range of texts will be needed – text and web-based.
3. Although the information in this unit is mainly theoretical, opportunities should be given for learners to relate knowledge about language to their own experiences as language users, and to the situation of deaf and deafblind people.
4. This unit will also benefit from case study materials that can act as prompts for discussions about different strategies that can be used with a wide range of deaf and deafblind people in different settings. It may also be useful to look at some of the written material that deaf and deafblind people need to access.



A. Concepts and structures for describing and analysing English

Learning outcome: Know the key concepts, structures and discourse features used to describe/analyse English

Background general knowledge about language

This background general knowledge will not be tested in the assessment.

- **Equal complexity** – There are no ‘simple’ or ‘primitive’ languages. All languages have complex grammatical or phonological rules. Each language’s grammar can create an infinite range of utterances and sentences. No language is linguistically superior to any other, though some languages may have more social prestige, e.g. due to the political or economic status/influence of their speakers/signers.
- **Equal potential to express meaning** – All languages can express the range of meanings required by their users/speakers, e.g. different languages have specialist vocabulary for areas of particular relevance to their culture and way of life.
- **Language use is always interactive** – When speaking/signing/writing we have an ‘audience’ in mind, even if we are not addressing them face to face. We alter our language to match the reader/listener and our purpose (e.g. report, essay, story, letter; formal or informal).
- **Language reflects cultural values** – Language use reflects cultural values, and the immediate social situation. Different cultures may have different kinds of writing and different ways of speaking, e.g. there are ‘ground rules’ about when people can talk, who has the right to talk the most and what kinds of topics are considered relevant.

Some languages/dialects/accents have a dominant position (socially and legally) e.g. some English accents are more prestigious than others. People who use the dominant language/dialect/accent often have high social status.

Attitudes to different languages/varieties (e.g. accents and dialects) depend on the status of the group who use them, e.g. if a group of people have high status, then we assume their language is ‘good’ and ‘high status’ as well.



- **Arbitrary relationship between sound and meaning** – Generally sounds and meanings are not related, however there are some onomatopoeic words (though even these vary between languages).

Language variation and change

- **Dialect** – grammar and vocabulary – can be regional (e.g. West Country, Scottish), or social (e.g. Standard English).
- **Accent** – pronunciation – can be regional (e.g. West Country, Scottish) or social (e.g. Received Pronunciation).
- **Register and style** e.g. formal, informal, technical, academic, colloquial, intimate, humorous, religious, scientific, legal, journalistic.
- **Change** over time and changes in word meanings.
- **New words** e.g. from other languages, or new inventions.

Key structures and discourse features of English

NB This section underpins the issues around English described in Parts B & C.

- **Phonetics** – How the speech movements of English are produced (place and manner of articulation, voiced/voiceless).
(NB students only need to know enough about phonetics to enable them to understand why some sounds are difficult to access, as described in Part B)
- **Phonology** – How sounds are used to make meaning; phonemes; which sounds make a different word, e.g. big and pig.
- **Syntax/grammar** – How words are combined into written sentences and spoken utterances in a certain order, e.g. in English, subjects usually come before verbs, except in questions.



- Word categories:
 - noun
 - verb
 - pronoun

- Verbs:
 - active and passive

- Different kinds of sentences:
 - simple
 - compound
 - complex sentences + main clauses and subordinate clauses

- **Semantics** – The study of meaning in language. How meanings of words relate to each other:
 - synonyms, antonyms,
 - hyponyms (superordinates), hypernyms.

- **Discourse/text** – A piece of connected speech or writing that is longer than a conventional sentence, e.g. conversation, lecture, interview, a notice, essay, letter.

- **Cohesion** – how links are created across a text between utterances/sentences:
 - reference words (e.g. pronouns)
 - synonyms
 - connectives.

- **Language modes** – spoken and written.
 - Differences between written and spoken language; each has its own different kind of complexity:
 - vocabulary
 - grammatical differences
 - style and register.



B. Issues around access to spoken English. Ways of making spoken English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Learning outcome: Know reasons and techniques for making spoken English accessible for deaf and deafblind people.

Conditions under which children learn spoken language effectively

- Children are conversationalists, even if they are not yet talking. Children learn very early about how conversations work (taking turns, looking attentively, using facial expressions, etc) as long as they have experiences with conversing adults.
- Parents, caregivers, teachers and guardians are the chief resources in language development. Strategies which may help language development include expansion and extension of child's utterances; semantic contingency of adult's language, language used in the context of joint activity, child initiated topics.
- Interaction between children is very important - peer learning is an important part of language development.

As children learn language they also learn their culture, and ways of doing things within their culture. The way we acquire and use language affects the way we think and remember information.

Development of spoken language and communication in deaf and deafblind children

- Deaf, deafblind and hearing people's different experiences in acquiring spoken English, e.g.
 - reduced access to speech and language around them, effect of deafness on interactional patterns with family and peers
 - deaf children may have less frequent interactions with peers than hearing children do and their conversations may be briefer with difficulties in maintaining joint attention
 - deaf children often have to shift attention between their activities and their language partners in order to obtain information about what is going on around them and about language itself. So they receive the input from these two sources sequentially, which can make the link between language and meaning less obvious.



- Possible implications of this, e.g. reduced access to spoken language with which to work out more rules often results in delays in acquiring English vocabulary, grammar, knowledge of the world.
- Indicators of favourable language outcomes for deaf and deafblind children:
 - Early identification of deafness
 - Higher nonverbal cognitive ability
 - Higher socio-economic position of the family
 - Degree/type of hearing/dual sensory loss (from second year of life)
 - Regular use of hearing aids/cochlear implants/low vision aids
 - No other language/learning difficulty
 - Parents' use of eye contact with fluent language.

Speech movements/sounds which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind lipreaders/speechreaders

- Sounds which are not visible on the lips, e.g. /s/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g.
- Sounds which look similar on the lips, e.g. /p/, /b/, /m/ or /f/, /v.
- Low frequency and high frequency sounds:
 - High frequency sounds for deaf people with a high frequency loss
 - Low frequency sounds for deaf people with a low frequency loss.
- Homophones – words which sound the same and have the same lip patterns, e.g. world and whirled.
- Homophenes – words which sound different but have the same lip patterns, e.g. bale, pale, male.
- Substitutions – words with slightly different lip patterns, but which are likely to be confused with each other, e.g. driving licence, traffic lights.

Ways of making spoken language accessible for deaf and deafblind people

- Environmental – e.g. Good lighting, facial expression, faces and distractions, plain background, improving the listening environment.
- Use of language/making lipreading easier – e.g. complete sentences, regular breaks, context first, explaining homophones, differentiating words that look the same on the lips,



pausing at utterance ends, less emphasis on voiced stress, clear lip patterns, clearer speech movements than normal from speaker, delivery at a more measured pace.

- Maximising use of residual hearing – e.g. hearing aids, cochlear implants, radio aids.
- Use of signs with spoken language:
 - What is SSE/SEE/SE?
 - Advantages and benefits
 - Limitations – e.g. signing and speaking at the same time can slow down and distort speech
 - Strategies for effective use – e.g. importance of having a large and wide range of BSL vocabulary, maintaining speech rhythms, use of English grammatical markers/signs for function words.
- Use of cued speech:
 - What is cued speech?
 - Advantages and benefits – e.g. the role of cued speech in disambiguating the lip patterns of spoken English, importance of giving access to natural and full language used fluently in 'real-time' rather than a filtered or pared down version of language
 - Limitations
 - Strategies for effective use – importance of having clear, accurate hand-shapes and positions in combination with lip patterns of natural speech to give unambiguous access, matching speech rhythms/dialects/style, giving access to everyday environmental sounds.
- Deafblind Manual Alphabet to communicate spoken English:
 - What is DMA?
 - Advantages and benefits
 - Limitations
 - Strategies for effective use – making word, phrase and clause boundaries clear, speed, use of abbreviations and some braille contractions.



C. Issues around access to written English. Ways of making written English more accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Learning outcome: Know reasons and techniques for making written English accessible for deaf and deafblind people.

Development of written language in deaf and deafblind children

- Deaf, deafblind and hearing people's different experiences in acquiring written English, e.g:
 - Hearing children are able to 'map' their knowledge of spoken language onto the written form; deaf children may have less access to spoken language to base this process on
 - Learning English as a second language – when hearing people learn a second language they are often able to transfer vocabulary or cognates or even grammatical patterns. For deaf and deafblind people with BSL learning English literacy, there is no obvious link between the word and sign
 - Factors that affect the deaf or deafblind person's access to written English, e.g. educational, environmental, family/support, level of hearing/sight loss, access to technology.
- Possible implications of this for deaf and deafblind children:
 - Deaf and deafblind children may find it more difficult to understand written texts, with less knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, world knowledge, and different kinds of texts.

Features of written English which may present difficulties for deaf and deafblind people

- Poor presentation - unclear/cluttered layout or font.
- Less frequent vocabulary, e.g. subject specific terms, new words, words that have changed their meaning, familiar words with a specialist meaning.
- Idioms.
- Complex grammar, e.g. lengthy sentences, complex sentences, some passive verbs.
- Cohesive links unclear, e.g. unclear use of pronouns, synonyms, connectives.



Ways of making written language accessible for deaf and deafblind people

Modifying written English texts:

- Improve presentation (e.g. subheadings, spacing, diagrams, font size, left justified text, avoid writing text in capitals)
- Vocabulary – use more frequent words where appropriate (co-build dictionary indicates the frequency of words), include glossary
- Rewrite idioms where appropriate, or explain them
- Grammar – use grammatically correct English, and simpler sentence structures. Change passive verbs to active where appropriate
- Cohesion – ensure that cohesive links are clear.

Advantages and limitations of modifying texts

Advantages may include:

- Many deaf readers have difficulty understanding texts they need to read, so modifying the texts makes them accessible
- Learners need lots of practice with texts which match their level to enable them to improve their English literacy.

Limitations may include:

- Sometimes simplifying texts can reduce cohesion and give the reader fewer clues
- If deaf learners always read modified texts they may not develop strategies for reading more challenging texts.



UNIT SPECIFICATION

Unit T303 – Modifying Written Texts for Deaf and Deafblind People

(QCF Accreditation Number: R/602/0654)

This unit provides learners with technical knowledge of English language modification and skills in modifying written text which are then applied in the context of a particular role and setting.

Guided learning hours (GLH)	Additional study hours	Total learning time	Credit value at level
20	10	30	3

Unit Summary

Unit T303 forms part of the Signature Level 3 Award in Modifying Written English Texts for Deaf People.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful candidate can:
1. Understand the principles of modifying a text for deaf and deafblind readers	1.1 Identify the advantages and disadvantages of modifying a particular text in a given context 1.2 Identify the context, purpose, style, readability and potentially difficult features of a text
2. Be able to modify written English texts, presenting them in a form which is accessible to deaf and deafblind people	2.1 Produce an accurately modified text, maintaining core content and cohesion and clear, grammatical English 2.2 Improve the readability of the modified text using appropriate layout and presentation features 2.3 Demonstrate how the modified text is checked for accuracy, reading level and cohesion



Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
At the end of this unit of learning, the successful learner will:	At the end of this unit of learning, the successful candidate can:
3. Be able to evaluate own modified texts and justify decisions made	3.1 Evaluate the success of the modified text for the deaf/deafblind reader 3.2 Discuss how the modified text could be stored and used by others

Topic Content

A. Contexts and issues in modifying texts

- Situations when modified texts are used.
- The advantages and disadvantages of modifying written texts for deaf readers.
- Factors in deciding whether to modify a particular text.
- Analysing a text in preparation for modification.

B. Techniques of language modification

- Producing a modified version of a given text using correct written English (language).
- Using appropriate modification strategies.
- Layout and design.
- Obtaining texts in alternative formats.

C. Checking and evaluating modified text

- Checking the modified text.
- Improving layout and design.
- Measuring improvement in readability.
- Obtaining feedback from relevant people.
- Ownership, storage and accessibility of modified and original texts.



ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Please read this specification in conjunction with Signature Assessment Regulations and Signature General Regulations on our website.

Assessment for this unit is in two parts. Part 1 should be completed before applying to Signature to carry out Part 2.

Part 1: A student portfolio with two original and modified texts, including self evaluations. Part 1 will be internally assessed by the teacher.
[An appropriate sample of the marked portfolios will be requested by Signature at the same time as the written test (Part 2 below), for quality assurance purposes.]

NB. If the sample of portfolios moderated by Signature does not meet the required standard, ALL portfolios may be requested for moderation and the original result may then change

Part 2: A one hour and 45 minute assessment under examination conditions: the candidate will:

- a) modify a given text of approximately 200 words;
- b) provide a self-evaluation of their modified text.

Part 2 will be externally marked by Signature assessors.

In order to pass this unit, candidates must meet the assessment criteria in both Part 1 and Part 2 of the assessment.

Centres will need to provide access to computers with a word processing program such as Word, which has spell and grammar checking facilities.



Unit T303 – Modifying Written Texts for Deaf and Deafblind People

PORTFOLIO MARKING SHEET (PART 1) (for internal assessor use)

Candidate name: Candidate ID No: Date:

The above candidate has provided the following evidence of their knowledge of modifying written English texts:

Assessment Criteria	Evidence shown in	Text 1 ✓	Text 2 ✓	Criterion achieved (in at least one text) ✓
1.1 Identify the advantages and disadvantages of modifying a particular text in a given context	<i>Self-evaluation</i>			
1.2 Identify the context, purpose, style, readability and potentially difficult features of a text	<i>Self-evaluation</i>			
2.1 Produce an accurately modified text, maintaining core content and cohesion and clear, grammatical English	<i>Modified text</i>			
2.2 Improve the readability of the modified text using appropriate layout and presentation features	<i>Modified text</i>			
2.3 Demonstrate how the modified text is checked for accuracy, reading level and cohesion	<i>Self-evaluation;</i> <i>Modified text</i>			
3.1 Evaluate the success of the modified text for the deaf/deafblind reader	<i>Self-evaluation</i>			
3.2 Discuss how the modified text could be stored and used by others	<i>Self-evaluation</i>			

Internal Assessor signature:

Date:



Unit T303 – Modifying Written Texts for Deaf and Deafblind People

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT RECORD FORM (PART 2) (for external assessor use only)

Candidate name:

Candidate ID No: Date:

The above candidate has provided the following evidence of their knowledge of modifying a written English text under examination conditions:

Assessment Criteria (All criteria must be achieved)	Evidence shown in	Criterion achieved ✓
1.1 Identify the advantages and disadvantages of modifying a particular text in a given context	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	
1.2 Identify the context, purpose, style, readability and potentially difficult features of a text	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	
2.1 Produce an accurately modified text, maintaining core content and cohesion and clear, grammatical English	<i>Modified text</i>	
2.2 Improve the readability of the modified text using appropriate layout and presentation features	<i>Modified text</i>	
2.3 Demonstrate how the modified text is checked for accuracy, reading level and cohesion	<i>Self-evaluation;</i> <i>Modified text</i>	
3.1 Evaluate the success of the modified text for the deaf/deafblind reader	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	
3.2 Discuss how the modified text could be stored and used by others	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	

I confirm that this candidate has achieved the standard for this unit

I am unable to confirm that this candidate has achieved the standard for this unit

External Assessor signature:

Name: Date:



Quality Assurance

External assessors will also be asked to check the internally-assessed portfolio of a sample of candidates for this assessment, for quality assurance purposes. Please record your decisions below:

	✓ tick one box
i. I have not been asked to carry out quality assurance checks on this candidate's portfolio.	
ii. I have been asked to carry out quality assurance checks on this candidate's portfolio. I support the internal assessment decisions made in relation to this candidate for Unit T303.	
iii. I have been asked to carry out quality assurance checks on this candidate's portfolio. I do not support the internal assessment decisions made in relation to this candidate for Unit T303*.	

* If you have ticked box iii, please send a brief report to Signature explaining your decision, with feedback to enable the internal assessor to improve in future.

External Assessor signature:

Name: Date:



APPENDIX - INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Delivery strategies

This unit should be delivered by teachers who have a good all-round knowledge of language and detailed knowledge of English language. Colleges may find that ESOL teachers, qualified teachers of the deaf, or tutors/CSWs on the BATOD/NATED exams language panel may be suitable teachers for this unit.

This unit is a practical one which builds on the knowledge about English introduced in Unit L304. Opportunities should be given for candidates to relate knowledge about language to their own experiences as language users and to the situation of D/deaf people.

This unit will also benefit from case study materials which can act as prompts for discussions about different strategies that can be used with a wide range of deaf people in different settings. It would also be useful to look at written material that deaf people need to access.

This unit encourages a student-centred approach with a range of group discussions as well as practical exercises, and a close working/mentor relationship with candidates.

Candidates should have as much opportunity as possible to practice modifying texts. Texts of between 500 and 1000 words are recommended.

Other activities could include:

- Learning how to check readability using Word (NB. Don't make assumptions about the reading level of the deaf person)
- Using examples of texts to show that context of client, modifier and situation is very important in deciding what to modify
- Analysing a number of sample texts (use Wiki or other Google document) to check what features to look for. Find an example of each feature in a sample text. What would you modify and why?



- Learning how to write evaluations for inclusion in the portfolio, i.e. comments on why they changed things – give reasons
- Learning how to produce a glossary for a text
- Looking at/commenting on examples of reformatted texts
- Learning how to check that cohesion has been maintained
- Techniques for checking for accuracy
- Understanding readability statistics and interpreting results
- Finding out about Braille/Moon production costs and times in the local area.

Portfolio building (Part 1 of the assessment)

Portfolios are compiled using evidence of the candidate's knowledge and skill.

During the course, the candidate will have the opportunity to modify texts provided by the teacher, or produced from their own resources. The teacher and candidate should discuss the suitability of texts and particular deaf/deafblind client situations.

The candidate should keep a written record of the process of modifying each text, using the learning outcomes as a guide. This record should show why modification decisions were made, and why other options were rejected.

In her/his role as internal assessor, the teacher will give feedback and advise if/when a modified text is of sufficient quality to support the candidate's claim to be a competent modifier.

Candidates can attempt several examples of modified texts, and, taking advice from the teacher, will choose the best two to present in the portfolio. If a text falls short of the expected standard the candidate can redraft and resubmit once, but it may be better to leave that as a practice piece and try another one.

Two texts have to be in the portfolio, and both the original and the modified version must be included. If possible, the two submitted texts should cover different subjects and be aimed at different clients.

There is more than one way to modify any text, so the candidate's self-evaluation or commentary on the piece is just as important as the modified piece. The self-evaluation should justify the modifications made, and comment on any problems encountered, e.g. with maintaining accuracy, meaning, etc.



Where possible, the views of author/teachers/deaf client should be recorded and appear in the portfolio.

A. Contexts/issues in modifying texts

Learning outcome: Understand the principles of modifying a text for deaf and deafblind readers

- Situations when modified texts are used:
 - in educational settings with deaf/deafblind learners
 - when subtitling educational DVDs
 - in work situations to clarify work policies and procedures so that they are more accessible to deaf/deafblind employees.
- The advantages and disadvantages of modifying written texts for deaf readers.
 - Advantages: makes the text more accessible so that the deaf reader can have the same information as hearing people without having to struggle with new vocabulary or difficult grammar.
 - Disadvantages: expensive, time consuming and if it's not done well it can lead to more confusion. If all texts are modified in an educational situation then the deaf learner may never be exposed to texts which are difficult, which would prevent improvements in reading skills.
- Factors in deciding whether to modify a particular text:
 - the skills and knowledge of the modifier
 - the readability of the text
 - the views of the deaf/deafblind client (if known)
 - the background knowledge and skills level of the client (if known)
 - how the text will be used
 - the time available.



- Analyse a text in terms of its:
 - context – how the author/teacher wants it to be used, e.g. handout in class, assignment brief, policy document; liaise with text author or teacher if appropriate
 - purpose and style
 - readability/ease of comprehension (using Word tools and text statistics)
 - potentially difficult features of text, e.g.
 - Layout and design
 - Cohesion and order of presentation of information
 - Superfluous information
 - Grammar, e.g. complex sentences, passive sentences, phrasal verbs, lengthy noun phrases
 - Vocabulary, e.g. unusual or infrequent words; technical or subject specific terms, double meanings, idioms
 - Assumed background information/knowledge of reader.

B. Techniques of language modification

Learning outcome: Be able to modify written English texts, presenting them in a form which is accessible to deaf and deafblind people.

Modifiers need to have very good comprehension skills and to have access to background specialist information.

- Produce a modified version of a given text using correct written English (language).
- Maintain core content and technical/subject specific vocabulary (one way in which technical terms can be explained is through a glossary).
- Maintain cohesion of texts.
- Use appropriate modification strategies, e.g.
 - delete superfluous information
 - paraphrase where this will clarify meaning
 - remove ambiguity
 - use simple grammatical structures and shorter sentences
 - choose the most frequent word whenever possible



- logical presentation of information
 - provide a glossary of terms/definitions if appropriate
 - use actives rather than passives where appropriate
 - use back-up materials and diagrams, if appropriate.
- Layout and design - improve readability by:
 - presentation of text
 - use of diagrams
 - font size
 - breaks and spacing
 - subheadings
 - left justified text
 - avoid writing text in capitals
 - use bold or italics for emphasis rather than underlining or capital letters.
 - Know how to get texts produced in Braille, large print or Moon using local contacts and agencies. There are agencies available to produce in alternative formats, but it will take time so good planning is needed.
 - For deafblind clients, modified texts can be produced in Braille and Moon. Many layout features may be lost in Braille.

C. Checking and evaluating modified text

Learning outcome: Be able to evaluate own modified texts and justify decisions made.

- Check the modified text:
 - check features of cohesion have been maintained;
 - check for accuracy of spelling and grammar;
 - check information is conveyed accurately, using reference sources if necessary;
 - check style has been maintained;
 - check layout and design (see B).



- Measure improvement in readability, using Microsoft Word tools and text statistics, and interpret these statistics to discuss the changes made to the text.
 - After modification the readability statistics can be compared to the original level to make sure the reading level is lower as appropriate for the deaf/deafblind client. These statistics are produced by looking at sentence length and word length, not word frequency, so they should be interpreted with caution. The results are often given in American grade levels, so equivalents with the UK education system are necessary. The aim is to get the grade level lower, and the reading ease % score up, but it depends on the needs of the deaf or deafblind client.
- Indicate where and how you would consult with relevant people:
 - If possible, consult with text author/teacher/deaf reader to check accuracy, fitness for purpose, and accessibility. It is important to amend the text as a result of these comments. When the modifier is working in a team, there may be a quality assurance process and time-limit for checking modified texts.
- Suggest ways in which modified and original texts can be stored and made accessible to other people, and why this is important.
 - Some deaf learners will not want other people to know that they are receiving modified texts.
 - There are advantages in sharing modified texts more widely, e.g. within a school or college or nationally with a database. However, learning materials rapidly go out of date.
- Discuss ownership of modified texts in relation to funded support. Modified texts may be made available to more than just the deaf client, but this will depend on the funding arrangements.
 - In Higher Education and in employment the choice about whether to share the modified text will depend on the deaf client.
 - In schools and colleges there may be negotiation to explain the benefits of sharing with other students, for example putting modified texts on the virtual learning environment.



The use of ICT is recommended and candidates should therefore have access to a computer, preferably with internet access.

Other resources for this unit include:

- articles and journals associated with the English language and deaf people;
- dictionaries (e.g. the *Cobuild* range), thesauri, grammars and other language resources such as word games (e.g. *Taboo*);
- samples of a variety of texts which need modifying.

The RNID library can provide copies of articles, and loan books, on issues relating to deafness:
www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/rnidlib.shtml

Forest bookshop: www.forestbooks.com

BATOD (2003) *Language of Examinations* 2nd edition. Available from www.forestbooks.com

Cobuild (2005), *Advanced Learners' English Dictionary* (London: Collins)

Cobuild (2002), *Dictionary of Idioms* (London: Collins)

Crystal D, *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 2nd edn.

Crystal D, *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 2nd edn.

Crystal D, *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 5th edn.

Crystal D, *Discover grammar* (Longman, 1996)

Crystal D, *Rediscover grammar* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004), 3rd edn.

O'Neill R, *Should we modify English language for deaf learners?* (Supporting Deaf People Online Conference 10 – 12 March 2005, <http://www.online-conference.co.uk/SDP3>)

Salkie R, *Text and Discourse Analysis* (Routledge, 1995)

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishguide.html>

