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Generation 1.5: Making Connections
between Speaking and Writing

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Generation 1.5 Learners at San Francisco
State Learning Assistance Center

- are generally orally proficient;
- communicate in English with ease and facility;
- have acquired English in ways similar to native speakers;
- have trouble learning and applying grammatical rules;
- struggle with conventions of academic English.

Assessing Practices; Developing an Approach;
Working with Orally Fluent Multilingual Learners

1. Acknowledge and draw upon students' strengths as oral communicators.
2. Develop activities that help students discover learning preferences: oral, aural, written.
3. Guide students in making connections between how they speak and how they write.
4. Help students raise awareness about the connection between spoken language and written discourse.

Activity 1. Warm-Up: Comparing Language
Backgrounds and Ways of Learning

Name	First language you learned?	How/when did you learn English?
Alvin	Chinese	from cousins, school
Larissa	Tagalog	at home
Jade	Ebonics	home; community
Michael	English	in pre-school: reading/writing
Marlena	Spanglish	mimicking teachers

Activity 2. Writing Comparing Learning in the
Aural Mode with Learning in the Written Mode

Directions

1. With a partner, use the information from the introductory activity about how you learned English to come up with two definitions: one for "eye learner" and the other for "ear learner." Write your definitions on the board.
2. As a large group, discuss the different ideas on the board to decide on two definitions that work for the class.

Activity 2. Writing Comparing Learning in the
Aural Mode with Learning in the Written Mode

Directions

3. With your partner, interview each other using the following question: "Are you an 'eye-learner' or 'ear-learner' of English? Ask your partner to explain why. Take notes.
4. For homework (on paper or OH transparencies), write a summary of your interview.

“Fernando learns better by eye learning. He said that with ear learning only he easily gets bored, but with eye learning, he learns more. He noticed he was a better learner by certain types of eye learning when he was 14 years old, when he read a book and understood nothing, but when he watched a movie and listened to the characters, he understood it all.”

“Loan is an eye and ear learner that uses both of her learning experiences to learn more. She uses both most of the time, but she can adopt any of the learning techniques depending on the situations. She said that for chemistry she uses both and for grammar only uses eye learning. She realize that she uses both last night whe she answer the homework question.”

Activity 3. Dictocomp: Listening, reconstructing text, negotiating meaning and form

- Students listen to a text read two or more times by the teacher;
- take notes on key words as they listen;
- work in pairs or small groups to negotiate meaning and form;
- reconstruct their own text based on the notes they have taken. (Wajnryb, 1990)

Activity 3. Dictocomp: Listening, reconstructing text, negotiating meaning and form

The dictocomp text can be

- a piece of student writing
- an excerpt from a reading
- a brief paragraph constructed by the teacher

The text the students produce

- conveys the meaning of the original
- is not necessarily identical (as in a dictation)

Activity 3. Dictocomp: Listening, reconstructing text, negotiating meaning and form

1. The teacher reads the whole text through at a normal pace, pausing slightly between sentences. Students don't write.
2. The teacher re-reads the text at a normal pace, pausing briefly between clauses. Students take notes.
3. Students in pairs, triads, or small groups, compare notes to reconstruct the text. Groups can write on the board, on overhead transparencies, or at their desks.

Activity 3. Dictocomp: Listening, reconstructing text, negotiating meaning and form

4. After reconstructing their texts, students apply their active editing strategies, negotiate form and meaning, and revise and correct their work.
5. As a class, compare different versions, examining the relationship between form and meaning, between spoken word and written text. Students look for evidence of oral forms or patterns in their written work: dropped endings, missing subjects, missing time expressions, or joining words.

I interviewed Don yesterday about what it means to be either an ear learner or an eye learner. He has some interesting ideas about this topic, mostly because he speaks two different languages that he learned in two different ways. For his first language, he speaks Cambodian, and he has been learning this language at home since he was a baby. From learning a language as a child, he understands that you listen, imitate, and repeat what others say. Learning Cambodian made him an ear learner. Yet he also learned English when he was in grade school. He learned by reading, which requires seeing then writing, and by memorizing, which requires studying worksheets and reading notes. Learning English has made him an eye learner as well as an ear learner.

Activity 4. Oral-Written Project

- raises students' awareness of differences between spoken and written English; (modified: Kutz, Groden, and Zamel, 1993)
- builds explicitly on students' competence as oral language users in order to develop their confidence with written academic English;
- engages students in a study of spoken and written communication: students discover how what they know and do as speakers links to what is required of writers communicating to an academic audience.

Activity 4. Oral-Written Project

Students

1. tell a story into a tape recorder and prepare transcriptions;
2. write the same story;
3. prepare a four-six page written comparative analysis of the written and oral story;
4. write a self-reflection about what they have learned from telling a story, writing a story, and writing a report for an academic audience.

"Many times idea just seem to come out, when telling or writing a story, but it is hard to prepare them to form sentences. In my oral, I was so lost, I did not know where to begin and had so many things going on in my head at once. I laughed and giggled a lot and used to interact with my audience. I tried to make eye contact to see if they were paying attention or if they were rolling their eyes at me or having a strange look. It was a lot harder to interact with my reader, but I had time to plan out what I was going to say and I was not scared because I could stop and go back to it when I remembered what was going; which I could not do in my oral."

Activity 4. Oral-Written Project: Outcomes

Students

- show an awareness of needs of audience in oral communication;
- reveal what they know about the unplanned nature of spoken language; how repairs and revisions are made on the spot;
- realize that writing requires sustained planning and revision; that they need to anticipate audience needs;
- compare oral competence with emerging understanding of what is required in written academic discourse.

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