September Deaf Learner Reading Group Discussion

Literacy and Academic Outcomes: Evidence and Discussions

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Selected readings:

Summary statements from the discussion and comments from participants:

- “Services the student is able to access during their education and other experiences may enhance their future success. However, how an individual is able to meld their experiences - employment, economics, emotional and physical health and community participation and knowledge of legal rights with their attitude, resilience and outlook on life is a better predictor of success than test scores alone.” - DHH/Disability Services Professional
- “In the Cuculick and Kelly (2003) article and the Garberoglio, Cawthon and Bond (2013) article, the authors inferred the importance of nonacademic skills for success in postsecondary education and careers. These skills are often referred to as grit, character and resilience and include specific skills related to perseverance, motivation, self-control, and social engagement (ACT, 2014). What actions can educators and families take to help students develop these important nonacademic skills?” – Session Facilitator
- “The actions K-12 educators of deaf students [take] to increase their commitment to reading and language instruction are not very different from the actions K-12 educators in the mainstream need to take. We have a growing population of students and adults who do not read, do not like to read and do not take the time to read. As educators and parents, we need to model reading in our classes and our homes, to make meaningful assignments requiring reading, including discussions of pre-knowledge of the subject, providing previewing questions that encourage reading and activities which provoke all to look for more information. There is truth to the phrase practice makes perfect, but we need to develop the love of the game too!”- DHH/Disability Services Professional
- “I feel a love of literacy would involve more signed stories beyond children's picture books, and more signed 'chapter books' to signed textbooks --- it's difficult to develop intellectual stamina when materials are only available in your second language.” – Sign Language Interpreter
- “Yes, I was referring to video books in ASL, much like Wink's rendition of Steve Job's biography. To develop the young mind to crave longer, more detailed stories, transitioning to non-fiction, information driven writing. There are many series books that would do well to have an ASL copy of
the first book, and entice the reader into the print version of the next in the series. Much like real life does not have problems solved in 30 minutes, like a sit-com, I believe the attention span of the reader needs to be developed as well.” – Sign Language Interpreter

“I agree with your support of having more signed video 'books' to encourage a love for reading. There are probably a lot of resources out there. Here is one that I particularly like. It was developed at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf along with partners like GA Tech: http://cats.gatech.edu/.”- State Agency Administrator

**Actions that parents and educators can take to promote reading motivation:**

- Be enthusiastic about reading;
- Model reading, discuss books and stories and promote interaction among students about literature;
- Be knowledgeable of students’ current level of functioning and help students choose materials they can read;
- Provide opportunities for choices about what to read; and
- Understand and respect students’ interests and provide appropriate selections.”

**A selection of researchable questions raised:**

- What can parents and educators do to help students who are deaf or hard of hearing become "highly focused, motivated, and persistent"?
- Do video books in ASL help the development of reading in written English?
- How can professionals help families learn ASL? What resources are effective for helping families develop their ASL skills?