CLERC CENTER
AT GALLAUDET

Bilingual Strategy: Free Translation

ADMINISTRATOR WALKTHROUGH CHECKLIST

Free translation is the process of conveying meaning across languages by prioritizing the intent, concept, and clarity of a message rather than matching words or structure directly. In an ASL/English bilingual context, it involves expressing ideas in ways that are natural to each language while maintaining the original meaning, audience, and purpose. This checklist is designed to guide administrator observations and feedback on how instruction supports students in developing flexibility, accuracy, and increasing independence in translating meaning across ASL and English.

Planning (Evidence of Intentional Design)

- ◯ Teacher intentionally plans opportunities for students to translate meaning across languages
- ◯ Tasks allow for flexibility in how ideas are expressed
- ◯ (MS/HS) Focus includes complex or academic language and concepts

Implementation (Classroom Look-Fors)

- ◯ Meaning is clearly established before translation occurs
- ◯ Teacher models translation for meaning (not word-for-word)
- ◯ Differences in expression between ASL and English are highlighted
- ◯ Students are guided to consider clarity, intent, and audience
- ◯ Students have opportunities to practice expressing ideas across languages
- ◯ (MS) Students are prompted to explain translation choices
- ◯ (MS/HS) Students are supported in refining meaning and clarity
- ◯ (HS) Students independently translate and adapt language to match meaning

Engagement (Student Evidence)

- ◯ Students demonstrate understanding of the concept, not isolated word-to-sign matches
- ◯ Students convey meaning accurately across ASL and English
- ◯ (MS) Students begin explaining translation choices
- ◯ (MS/HS) Students adjust language based on context
- ◯ (HS) Students independently and effectively translate ideas for different purposes

Instructional Integrity (What to Monitor)

- ◯ Free translation emphasizes meaning, not word-to-sign correspondence
- ◯ Translation occurs after comprehension is established
- ◯ Instruction supports flexibility and clarity across languages
- ◯ (MS/HS) Instruction reflects increasing student independence in developing accurate translation

Reflection (Coaching Prompts)

- ◯ How did the teacher ensure students understood the concept before translating?
- ◯ How were students supported in focusing on meaning rather than isolated word recognition?
- ◯ How did students demonstrate understanding across both languages?
- ◯ Where could students take more ownership in translating and adapting meaning?

NOTES