Bridging BSL and English when teaching literacy

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Challenges in teaching Deaf children

- Reading and writing in a second language
- Teaching new vocabulary (signed or spoken)
- Increasing conceptual understanding of the world/world knowledge
- Developing inferential skills
- Teaching grammatical and syntactic features of BSL and English, e.g. plurals, word endings, subject-verb agreement, word order, etc.
- Developing strategies for spelling
- Providing access to meanings of words in English, e.g. between synonyms (screamed/yelled/cried) or a word that has different meanings (homonyms)
- Create accessible and meaningful rich language environment through effective communication with opportunities for application, reinforcement and consolidation
Bilingual practice

• **In conversation** – developing an understanding of core knowledge and vocabulary through “oral” language.

• **In print** – using prior knowledge and vocabulary to develop appropriate interactive experience with the text.

• Using both BSL and English in both contexts.
Conversation

• “Verbal” communication
• Turn taking
• Question and answer
• Narrative content – e.g. sequential, compare/contrast, cause-effect
• Group discussion
Print

• English
  – Letter recognition (alphabet)
  – Word recognition and meaning
  – Sentence meaning
  – Text comprehension

• BSL
  – No written form
  – Sign graphics
  – Video recording
## Signing in context to demonstrate meaning

### Lexicon

- Called
- Fair

### Sentence (semantics)

- Mum **called** the doctor.
- He is **called** Sam.
- We **called** the dog.
- I **called** the waiter.

- Let’s go to the **fair**.
- That’s not **fair**.
- He has **fair** hair.
- That was a **fair** game.
Grammar

**BSL**
- BOY- RUN- HOME
- BOY- RUN- HOME-BEEN
- MARY– LIKE- BAKE- (point) BAKE-EVERY SUNDAY-CAKE
- ME-ASK (you)
- CAR-DRIVE (me)

**English**
- The boy is running home.
- The boy ran home.
- Mary likes cooking. She bakes cakes every Sunday.
- I ask you.
- I drive the car.
Grammar

BSL
• CAR- RED LOOK
• DOG – BIG- BARK- BARK-BARK
• SCHOOL- LIBRARY BOOK- ROWS
• PLEASE WALK (slowly)
• ME BORED (extremely)

English
• Look at that red car.
• The big dog is barking.
• There are many books in the school library.
• Please walk slowly.
• I am very bored.
Sign/word order

**English**

- Yesterday, the boy ate the sweet.
- The boy ate the sweet yesterday.

**BSL**

- YESTERDAY BOY EAT SWEET
- SWEET BOY EAT YESTERDAY
- BOY SWEET EAT YESTERDAY
Reading

- Translation of English to BSL: word, sentence, text level – meaning!!
- Teaching and use of syntactic, semantic and graphic cues to support the reading process
- Daily 1:1 guided reading
- Deaf adults (teacher/TA) deliver concepts in BSL
- BSL stories
- Visual phonics – decoding words
- English text with sign graphics
- Adaptation of age-appropriate texts (if necessary)
- Developing awareness of differences between BSL and written English structures and conventions.
Writing

- Translation of English to BSL
- Early/emergent/free writing
- Individual word files/personal dictionaries
- Colour coding – visual strategies for word class classification
- Scaffolding sheets with clear structure/frameworks
- Use of explicit comparisons between BSL and English to support the translation of BSL - English
Colour coding – word classes

- **Nouns** (Dd)
  - Demi-Joyce
  - daughter
  - dragon
  - dolphin
  - dog
  - daddy
  - dinosaur

- **Adjectives** (Rr)
  - ready
  - rich
  - responsible

- **Verbs** (Bb)
  - buying
  - buy
  - buying
  - bought
  - bring
  - bringing
  - brought
  - blow
  - blowing
  - blew

- **Adverbs**
Simple subject-verb sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Doing what?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mummy</td>
<td>cook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>ride.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Scaffolding sheet sample
(simple S-V-O sentences)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>car.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>park.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>drive</td>
<td>car.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My brother</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>birthday party.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>letter to Father Christmas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum</td>
<td>said,</td>
<td>“Tidy your room.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BSL- English comparison

**BSL**
- MARK GOAL
- IAN FINGER CUT
- CAT PAW LICK
- KATE POND FALL
- LAWN DAD CUT
- BONFIRE LIT HEATHER
- ANDREW LETTER POST
- HORSE GATE JUMP OVER

**English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10th October 2008</th>
<th>Aim: I can write sentences using English structure (word order)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Doing what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Scored a goal. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>Cut his finger. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cat</td>
<td>Licks her paw. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Fell into the pond. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>Cuts the lawn. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Lit the bonfire. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Posted a letter. ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horse</td>
<td>Jumped over the gate. ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scaffolding sample
(subject phrase)

- **BSL:**
  - BOY TALL
  - DOG ANGRY
  - GIRL BEAUTIFUL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article (a, an, the)</th>
<th>Adjective(s)</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>tall</td>
<td>boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An</td>
<td>angry</td>
<td>dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>girl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scaffolding sample – (subject phrase, verb, object)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article (a, an, the)</th>
<th>Adjective(s)</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun or Pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A tall boy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>was</td>
<td>running.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An angry dog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sat</td>
<td>kennel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beautiful girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ran</td>
<td>to the shop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further Information

• Working with Deaf Pupils: Sign Bilingual Policy into Practice
  Pamela Knight & Ruth Swanwick,
  2001, David Fulton Publishers

• Frank Barnes website:
  www.fbarnes.camden.sch.uk

• Contact Frank Barnes School on:
  admin@fbarnes.camden.sch.uk  0207 391 7040

• Visitors mornings – once a term
THANK YOU!