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LIS 518 ON

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## **Pathfinder: Understanding and learning sign language**

### **Scope Note:**

Sign language is a sequence of gestures used by deaf or hard of hearing people to communicate. It developed in hard of hearing and deaf communities all around the world, but due to the lack of communication between these communities in the past, the differences between these sign languages were so great, that sometimes they were mutually intelligible. However, the progress in technology brought many other options and opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing people to communicate in more universal ways and that lead to better understanding of the nature of sign language as well.

Not only deaf or hard of hearing people learn sign language. Many hearing people learn sign language because they have a loved one that is hard of hearing or deaf, as well as because of personal interests, like becoming an interpreter for example.

People are often intimidated by learning sign language, but learning to sign is much like learning a foreign language and it requires some of the same resources, practice and a lot of patience.

This pathfinder focuses on the basics of sign language learning and some helpful resources that will benefit the beginner in his/her journey in learning and understanding the nature of sign language and how to sign.

## **Introduction to the topic:**

Lewis, Karen B., and Roxanne Henderson. 1997. *Sign language made simple: A Complete Introduction to American Sign Language*. New York: Doubleday.

## **Subject Headings**

Sign language

Sign language acquisition

Sign language - - Study and teaching

American sign language

Deaf - - Means of Communication

Finger spelling

## **Handbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries**

Valli, Clayton. 2005. *The Gallaudet dictionary of American Sign Language*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Flodin, Mickey. 2004. *Signing illustrated: the complete learning guide*. New York: Berkley Pub. Group.

Turkington, Carol, and Allen E. Sussman. 2000. *The encyclopedia of deafness and hearing disorders*. New York, NY: Facts On File.

Sternberg, Martin L. A. 1981. *American sign language: a comprehensive dictionary*. New York: Harper & Row.

Madsen, Willard J. 1972. *Conversational sign language II: an intermediate-advanced manual*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet College.

## **Journals**

Sign Language Studies. (1972). ISSN: 0302-1475. Quarterly.

Sign Language Translator and Interpreter. (2007). ISSN: 1750-3981. Semi-Annually.

Language Learning: a journal of research in language studies. (1948). ISSN: 0023-8333. Quarterly.

Applied Psycholinguistics: psychological and linguistic studies across languages and learners. (1980). ISSN: 0142-7164. Quarterly.

Language & Communication: an interdisciplinary journal. (1981). ISSN: 0271-5309. Four times a year.

## **Abstracts and Indexes**

Education Research Complete. Online database, restricted access. Vendor: EBSCO Publishing. Subject Headings: Sign language;

Academic OneFile. Online database, restricted access. Vendor: Gale . Subject Headings: Sign Language

PsycINFO. Online access, restricted. Related database: PsycArticles . Vendor: EBSCO. Subject Headings: Sign language

ERIC. Online, restricted. Vendor: EBSCO. Subject Heading: Sign Language

Educator's Reference Complete. Online, restricted. Vendor: Gale. Subject Headings: I was not able to access this database; it was not available through UB.

Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA).Online, restricted. Vendor: Cambridge Scientific Abstracts

(Printed version) Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts,(1973-current). ISSN: 0888-8027. Vendor: Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.

## **8. Government Information**

*Accommodating students with hearing loss.* Morgantown, WV : U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Job Accommodation Network, [2010] SuDoc: L 41.17:H 35/3  
<http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo13137>

*Students who are deaf or hard of hearing in postsecondary education.* Washington, DC: HEATH Resource Center : U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center, [2001] SuDoc: ED 1.310/2:449775

Nover, Stephen M. *Critical pedagogy in deaf education: teachers' reflections on creating a bilingual classroom for deaf learners.* Santa Fe, N.M. : New Mexico School for the Deaf; [Washington, DC] : U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center, [2000] SuDoc: ED 1.310/2:450534

*Program for deaf adults: a multicultural model for deaf & hard-of-hearing students: LaGuardia Community College/CUNY Division of Adult and Continuing Education Program for Deaf Adults.* Rochester, NY : Northeast Technical Assistance Center, Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf ; Washington, DC] : U.S. Dept. of

Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center, [1999] SuDoc: ED 1.310/2:449616

*Education of children and youth who are deaf and hard of hearing: past, present and future federal support.* Alexandria, VA : National Association of State Directors of Special Education ; [Washington, DC] : U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center, [1999] SuDoc: ED 1.310/2:427484

Gustason, Gerilee. *Educating children who are deaf or hard of hearing[microform] :English-based sign systems.* Reston, VA : ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, the Council for Exceptional Children, [1997] SuDoc: ED 1.310/2:438634

## **9. Associations**

### Deaf Friends International DFI

Contact Info: PO Box 13192

Hamilton, OH 45013

e-mail: [dfi@workersforjesus.com](mailto:dfi@workersforjesus.com)

URL: <http://www.workersforjesus.com/dfi/front-eng.htm>

Description: The organization provides financial assistance (scholarships, assistance, disaster relief, hearing aid) to hearing impaired children and adults, as well as information services and resources. It also publishes a magazine.

### National Deaf Education Network and Clearinghouse

c/o Laurent Cierc National Deaf Education Center

Contact info: 800 Florida Ave. Ne

Washington DC 20002

Ph: (202)-651-5051

Fax(202)651- 5054

Telecommunications services: TDD: (202)651- 5051

E-mail: [clearinghouse.infotogo@gallaudet.edu](mailto:clearinghouse.infotogo@gallaudet.edu)

URL: <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>

Description: The network deals with information dissemination at the Gallaudet University Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education, it encompasses diverse topics of interest to deaf and hard of hearing children, ages birth to 21 years old. It also publishes Odyssey Magazine, with peer-reviewed articles and reports. The magazine is free for members or it is \$5.00 each.

Another publication is World Around You magazine, which motivates independent and assisted reading, creative writing and drawing for hearing impaired or deaf teens.

### Deaf Women United ( DWU)

Contact info: PO Box 64714

Rochester, NY 14624

E-mail: [dwuboard@dwu.org](mailto:dwuboard@dwu.org)

URL: <http://www.dwu.org>

Description: The organization promotes opportunities for deaf women in culture, politics, employment, education. It organizes social activities and opportunities for networking, tools, information and organizational management training, personal growth and empowerment, mentoring system.

It publishes Deaf Women United Newsletter (quarterly), where health care articles, editorial columns, board reports and upcoming events are promoted.

Membership:

Regular ( under age 62) \$25 annual

Senior citizen: \$15 annual

Special individuals with proof of public assistance: \$10 annual

Junior: under age 18, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind- \$10 annual

Supporting ( hearing women only) - \$20 annual

Affiliate /organization( at least 75 percent of deaf women) - \$50 annual

American Speech Language Hearing Association ( ASHA)

Contact info: 10801 Rockville Pike

Rockville, MD 20852

Free: 800 638-8255

Fax: 301 897-7355

Telecommunication services: teletype 301 897 5700

e-mail: [actioncenter@asha.org](mailto:actioncenter@asha.org)

Url: <http://www.asha.org>

Description: The organization provides information on speech, language and hearing disabilities, related services for hearing impaired and deaf people and their families.

*\*Note: The same organization was formerly known as American Association for the Hard of hearing( 1922), American Federation of Organizations for the Hard of hearing( 1935),*

*American Society for the hard of hearing( 1946), American hearing Society ( 1966), National Association of Hearing and Speech Agencies (1974), National Association for Hearing and Speech Action (1999)*

The organization publishes bimonthly pamphlets (newsletters) that cover communication disorders, development of speech, language and hearing in children.

## **Primary Sources**

Library of Congress. Image. (1894). *The Question of Sign Language – some Remarks upon Mr. Jenkins' Paper*. Letter by Alexander Graham Bell

<http://tinyurl.com/748z6zt> (Accessed April 7, 2012)

Library of Congress. Image. ( 1890 ~ 1895) *Photograph of Staff at Deaf and Blind School*. Telephone Co. History of the American West, 1860-1920: Photographs from the Collection of the Denver Public Library.

<http://tinyurl.com/72qentl> (Accessed April 7, 2012)

Library of Congress. Image. (1864) *Invitation from Edward M. Gallaudet to Abraham Lincoln to attend dedication of College for the Deaf*. Abraham Lincoln papers.

<http://tinyurl.com/dxqr9on> ( Accessed April 7, 2012)