

Language and literacy - ensuring deaf children have a good start to literacy



Sue Lewis

Definition

*“What I say I can write,
And
What I write I can read.”*

Avelyn Davidson



And.....

- If you can read and write fluently then you achieve more as a deaf person; literacy is a greater aid to learning for deaf children than any other media
- But
- In the past despite many trying to start reading and writing programmes very early with deaf children, many have left school with poor reading and writing skills compared with others of their age.

Message?

- Literacy matters
- The old approaches did not work for many deaf children
- Even with today's technology many deaf children do not keep up with their peers in reading and writing
- Why?

Deaf Children

- Early reading materials must not contain language and materials too far in advance of their own
- Must have some basic understandings about language and reading before they start to read in a formal sense
- Being pre tutored before reading supports access to text at a higher level
- will need support for reading beyond the primary school to ensure higher order reading skills develop

Deaf children and young people reading

- Strongest support that we can offer may be to strengthen linguistic base and learning strategies
- We must be careful in simplifying reading materials that we do not take away the very aspects that support the child's access to meaning
- *'providing deaf readers with more context rather than an isolated sentence or paragraph gives the opportunity to construct meaning regardless of difficult syntax or unfamiliar words.'* Ewoldt

In reading for example: Asking the right questions of the text

- Children need to both anticipate and reflect on text
- this involves asking the right questions of the text
- adults model this constantly by the sorts of questions they ask children both in relation to books and life in general
- this happens from the moment that experiences are jointly recounted and stories are retold
- the questions we ask either spoken and written confirm for children what reading is about

So what must you understand?

- About expressing meanings? - narratives
- About language? Structure?
- About sounds and letters?
- About books?

How do you learn these?

- In the most enjoyable way possible
- In playing and role play
- By sharing books
- By listening to stories
- By having others tell you their experiences
- By observing others reading and writing ... and enjoying it
- By having a go

Reading and writing

- Involve working out – thinking about meanings – working out other people's meanings; working out how to tell someone something
- If you can't do this in spoken language this makes it very difficult for you to do it in written language

Research with deaf readers (Ewoldt 1994) demonstrates

- Influence of teaching method
- reading for meaning in the early stages fosters a greater depth of understanding at syntactic and semantic levels
- Whole story v sentence methods are most productive
- reading is dependent on and reflects the child's linguistic, cognitive and experiential levels.

So....

- Story approaches are most effective in supporting reading (and support narrative understanding for writing)
– what does this mean? – what is a story?
- Developmental approaches are most effective in supporting writing - mark making, writing reflects the child's current language and his ideas

When we learn we make mistakes

“It’s important that children are encouraged to make mistakes”



Starting with writing rather than reading?

- Why?

So what is the language knowledge necessary for smooth progress?

- Separating reading and writing out is in many ways artificial particularly in the early stages
- A child needs to be able to 'read back' to him/herself what he has written to consider its satisfactoriness for 'him'
- Children need to know about how to express meaning, have begun to do so conventionally;
- They need to be interested in what others say to him including the words they use and the form it takes
- Just as for language comprehension and expression many of the routes to fluency, strategies and skills are similar, the same can be said for reading and writing
Early writing is very close to 'speech'



mdisgts hps

"My dad is going to the shops."

Pre Phonemic

Characteristics of this stage:

“ My Dad is going to the shops ”

- Attempts to represent sounds in words
- Relies heavily on the most obvious sounds in words
- Spaces between words are often omitted
- Can read back own writing
- Aware that print conveys a message





b o e L E E F C H
K W T h z w z 4 2 1
I S I L L E E F F .
J I E E F F F F F O O O O O >
W W W W T T T T T T T T

Characteristics of this stage:

- Uses known letters to represent their language
- Assigns a message to their writing
- Understanding drawing and writing are different
- Beginning to show awareness of directionality





(09811) sie sajs

DD  tips

 apps

 P.h.c.k.s

 Swets.

Cks   

CUSTD 

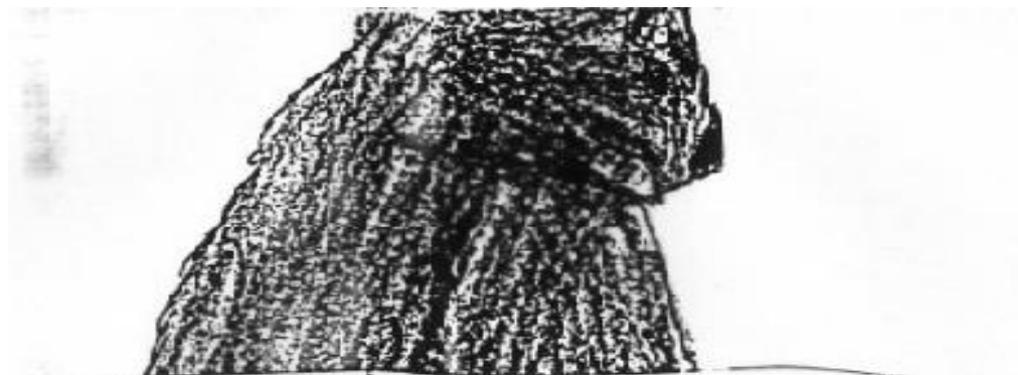
COK 

Phonemic

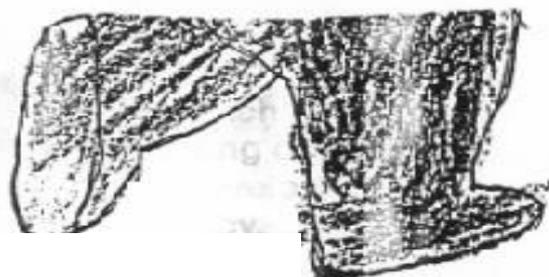
Characteristics of this stage:

- Good attempt at representing sounds in letters
- Views words as separate units
- Can explain in context, some of the purposes for writing e.g. a shopping list





I am sad beecos I didnt get
a friend I d maste got wun
but they ran awy from me
Im niver goyntoe get a friend.



Transitional

Characteristics of this stage:

- Writing looks fairly correct but spelling rules applied uncertainly
- Uses basic sentence structure
- Beginning to use basic punctuation
- Uses directionality correctly and consistently



Fluent

Characteristics of this stage:

- Sentence Writing
- 6 Traits of Writing-

Conventions, organisation, Voice, means, word choice, sentence fluency.

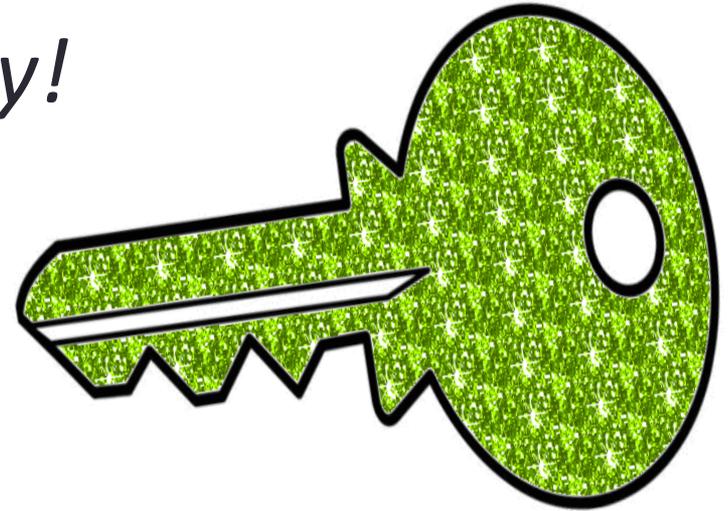


How do we approach writing?

Motivation is the key!

Writing needs to :

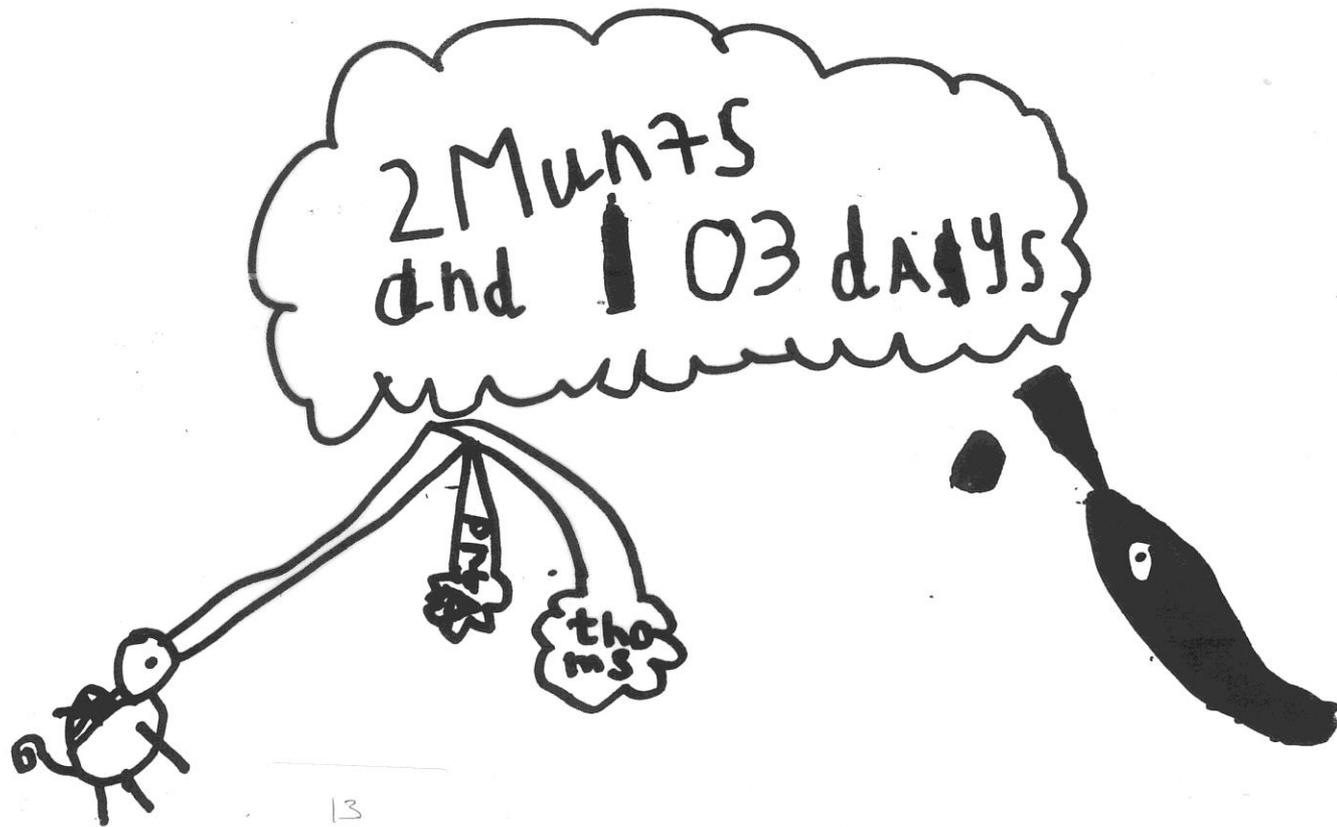
- *be meaningful*
- *have a purpose*
- *has to communicate*





MAB Yo can climb to
My house on the esdr
hold as

¹²
Charlie



Charlie

Teaching reading and writing to deaf Children

- Younger children
- - Use their meaning, language and vocabulary, talk, talk, talk
 - May be a later start to formal reading – but lots of sharing of books, home made books,
 - Corrections made to writing must be within context of child's current linguistic level
 - be careful when teaching phonics
 - make sure the foundations are being laid in talking for higher level skills
 - Implement specific 'kick start' programmes if necessary e.g. story re-tell programmes
 - ***This must be reflected in IEPs and guidance given to mainstream staff; much of what I am saying is good practice with any child but***

Older Pupils

- Continued support for language and literacy skills and strategies
- Clear identification of focus of support - strategies the child needs to develop next – skimming, comprehension of points of view/ paragraph meaning etc etc
- Pre tutoring to support access to text, including DARTS type activities (texts will be related to curriculum child need to access)
- Guided differentiation to mainstream teachers, including clear identification of IEP targets and roles and responsibilities in relation to these
- Detailed monitoring and assessment of reading and writing progress
- ***Support for language and literacy will move the child's access to curriculum forward on all fronts***

So where are the known areas of difficulty in deaf children's written language?

- Important to distinguish between the technical aspects of language and the expression component
- Inspection of many deaf children's writing in books reveals much of emphasis to be on technical component – spelling, grammar and not necessarily on improving ideas, style, choices, fluency

What is not written language?

- Copying from text books or from the board
- Repetitive exercises that involve slotting in individual words to complete sentence
- Cloze exercises related to text or where the form required can be fully retrieved from the passage
- Dictation or adult dominated formulation of a sentence that will then be remembered and written down by the child.
- Written language comes wholly from the child; its expression can be supported by the adult but should not be transformed by the adult

Differences in the experience of writing

- Many deaf children start writing from a more limited language and experience base
- This may lead to a focus on lower level writing tasks which mask the purpose of writing for them
- Purpose of writing may become blurred – why am I doing this, who is this for
- Focus is to outcome orientated (to finish a piece of writing, rather than on skills)

Other issues

- Insufficient time is spent talking pre writing to ensure the child is clear re purpose, audience and the type of writing he/she is to produce
- Children need to approach and complete tasks with a clear agenda in mind
- Feedback re the form of writing must take account of the child's grammatical level
- Feedback re ideas must take account of the child's cognitive level

Sometimes we might have to put in specific help

- But why and in what?
- Starting point is knowing the child's linguistic level and progress in this area – is this the issue
- What about approach and attitude?
- Is it a specific writing/ reading skill?

Example 1: Lucy 6 years 6 months, Y2

- Information available
- Profound bi-lateral hearing loss
- Talking at the 3-4 word level
- reading - small sight vocabulary; knows letter names and small group of individual sounds; writing - Lucy writes the words she knows on request - 'scribble writes' alongside other children
- Lucy still does not attend readily to others' ideas, expecting them to follow her. She reacts to adults initial inputs rather than waiting for them to finish

Implications for reading and writing programmes?

Lucy needs to

- Continue to build up her linguistic base as a resource for writing (pre tutoring, discussion around text, sharing books, talking about events/ characters etc)
- Become a responder to and evaluator of others' ideas/ information (adults expect her to listen and respond to their chosen topics including what they have been reading with her)
- use the words and sounds she knows and uses as a basis for her High Frequency words and learning of phoneme/ grapheme relationships
- use own language for reading and writing and have accuracy/ quality evaluated against her current levels; emphasis on shared writing; 'have a go' writing

Implications for Lucy's writing programmes?

Her teachers and support staff need to

- Plan any withdrawal work so that it is targeted on Lucy's needs (not simply so that she completes the work)
- Have a clear idea of the skills an activity is designed to support in Lucy's writing and ensure support reflects this, including when Lucy will have as independent write, shared or guided write
- Value Lucy's own emergent writing and ensure she uses it for a range of forms
- Protect the meaningfulness of the materials to which she is exposed - including the words she will blend up to and spell
- articulate the sounds properly!!!!!! Identify any she is having particular difficulty with and whether there are implications for her amplification package
- ensure staff understand what is 'correct' and should be rewarded

Lucy's story re-tell: re-tell 1

- *Man dig potato.*
- Long silence and expectant looks

- *Eat. Yum Yum*

Re tell 4 (2 weeks later)

- Mummy bear daddy bear baby bear. Come on. Ready. Too hot. Go for walk
- Goldilocks come. Knock Knock ; nobody there. Naughty girl go in.
- Too hot, too cold ; mm lovely; naughty girl eat that;
- Sit down; ooh lovely help (soft); nother one, ooh no too hard; mm lovely – oh dear chair broken; upstairs not that one; not that one; go to sleep;
- Oh no ! Daddy, mummy baby bear come back; open door; what happen; mummy bear cross; baby cry; where my food, no food. Look around – oh no look my chair; poor baby bear

Re-tell 16 weeks later (aged 7 years 3 months)

Lucy writes: Lucy's self correction; teacher writes

- *Once upon time little boy name Jack; Jack got no dad; Jack mum very poor; one day look in the kitchen; no food. Mum think "Oh dear What I do? I know I sell cow."*
- *Jack very sad. He love cow. ' Oh dear mum I don't want sell cow; please keep cow; she my friend" But mum says " no, havent any money, must sell cow."*
- *Jack go with cow; he walking slowly because not want to sell cow. He thinks market too far. Jack is tired. Suddenly a funny man come. Where the man come from? Jack was surprise. Man say "please sell me the cow. It a lovely cow. I ve got magic beans."*
- *Jack is very silly boy . He forgot about the money. He want to play with magic)2 more pages*