

Canadian Journal of Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Message from the Acting National Director

Dear CAEDHH Members,

I hope you are all well and have had a great start to 2017! It really is amazing how time flies by. I am surprised to be writing this report again, as I did not expect to take on the role as national director after I finished my term in 2015.



CAEDHH's values include maintaining unity and transparency with our membership. It is for this reason that I'll share with you that this year has been a challenge. Filling the role of both past national director and current national director means that work is spread between fewer members than it should be. We also currently do not have a Manitoba/Ontario/Saskatchewan regional director, so our CAEDHH executive is short-staffed. I'm sure I don't have to tell you that is less than ideal to have one person filling three separate positions. As of publishing time, the executive consists of the following members in these respective roles:

Cindy Neil	Acting National Director Past National Director Regional Director (MB/ON/SK)
Dana MacLeod	Regional Director (Maritimes) Journal Editor
Kevin Hennessey	Regional Director (NFLD)
Bowen Tang	Regional Director (BC/AB/Yukon)

With that being said, you might be wondering what the current executive has been up to. I would like to share some of the highlights from the past year to give you an idea on what happens on a national level.

In 2015-2016, the Executive:

- Took part in one in-person meeting and four Skype meetings, directed towards addressing member's questions, pinpointing current needs and identifying CAEDHH's role as a national professional association.
- Compiled and shared reports from all CAEDHH regions and from the certification committee.
- Created a system by which to archive CAEDHH business electronically. We have set-up a schedule and system for timelines and safekeeping.
- Received a financial report and revised finance items as necessary. The budget was carefully analyzed.
- Established new honorary members.

- Established deadlines, honorarium and roles and responsibilities for the CAEDHH Journal. We discussed content for the two 2017 editions of the journal and most effective ways to share with our membership.
- Updated the website, discussed ongoing technical difficulties and discussed how to improve the website.
- Scheduled tentative dates for future meetings.
- Examined the responsibilities of the regional directors.
- National Award System
 - Review interest
 - Establish dates
- Redefined CAEDHH's regions. Regional directors will ask their executive whether they are in agreement with adopting proposed new names (CAEDHH West, CAEDHH Central, CAEDHH NL, and CAEDHH East).
- Discussed CAEDHH public relations and how to better interact with membership.
- Updated CAEDHH's facts booklet.
- Awards
 - Outstanding Personal Contribution to CAEDHH
 - RJD Williams Scholarship
- Discussed the possibility of starting a national campaign to have all provincial ministries require CAEDHH certification for TDHH positions and early interventionists.
- Reviewed current membership fees, suggestions from different affiliates, member concerns and feedback.
- Discussed CAEDHH national executive succession plans. An in-depth discussion centred around the role of CAEDHH National Director 2017-2019. The executive considered who to nominate.

As National Director, I spend quite a bit of time responding to emails about a wide variety of topics and try to reply to people as efficiently as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I also hope to see new faces on the executive and encourage people to step up and be a part of the action. It will soon be time for a new national director to take over and I'm happy to note that Kevin Hennessey, our regional director for CAEDHH Newfoundland/Labrador., has been nominated to the role. The CAEDHH national executive has allowed his name to stand, but nominations are still being accepted. If you are interested in taking a more active role in your national professional organization, please contact your CAEDHH regional director to put forth your name.

Many of the current executive members have given a significant amount of personal time and effort, and continue to contribute to CAEDHH in the spirit of service to the profession. We hope to maintain the integrity of our national organization that helps to define our professional standards, uphold our values and ethics, and provide an avenue for collaborating and fostering new ideas. I look forward to returning to the role of past president and supporting a new national director in the summer.

Cindy Neil, Past National Director of CAEDHH and Current Acting National Director of CAEDHH

Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Director's Report

So far this year, the winter season has been one of the easiest in recent memory; moderate temperatures, less snowfall than usual, and frequent sunny days make the work lives of Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing much more pleasant.



The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has completed a number of meetings and professional development sessions which were intended to support Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and make their practice more consistent across the province. A working group comprised of representatives of both Itinerant Teachers and school-based Teachers D/HH, as well as personnel from the Division of Student Support Services at the Dept. of Education, has concluded its work regarding education of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing student population in NL. Some highlights of this three year project included the following professional development sessions:

1. Sharon Robertson, Itinerant Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who works with APSEA in New Brunswick, offered a three day inservice on the new SKI-HI curriculum.
2. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick from the University of Ottawa, and Anita Bernstein from VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, presented a number of sessions on various topics, including "Facilitating Listening and Spoken Language" which was intended to offer the basic components of the Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS) designation to D/HH Educators in NL.
3. Mentoring opportunities were made available to any Itinerant Teacher D/HH wishing to pursue the LSLS certification.
4. Efforts to create a central database to house statistical information for D/HH students in the province are ongoing. Most of our student information, including assessment results and yearly goals/objectives have been placed on the APSEA database. As well, deadlines have been set for completion of assessment reports and yearly working plans for all D/HH youth in the province.
5. In April, 2016, the Newfoundland and Labrador division of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association sponsored a workshop entitled "Youth Vibrations" for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students in grades 9 to 12 which was held at the Marriott Hotel in St. John's. This was a transition workshop designed to expose students to various career

opportunities. Unfortunately, due to a late winter storm, visits to the Marine Institute of Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic did not take place. We did, however, have a very interesting tour of the main campus of Memorial University and were able to proceed with other planned activities. The students found this workshop a tremendously beneficial experience which allowed them to bond with other students across the province and make some wonderful connections.

6. Local DHH Educators continue to sponsor a scholarship for a graduating Deaf/Hard of Hearing student in our province.

Kevin Hennessey, Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Director

Maritimes Regional Director's Report



It is an interesting and uncertain time for some teachers in the Maritimes. Nova Scotia public school teachers have been involved in contract negotiations for some time now, and, after rejecting two offers, they voted in October to strike. Since December 5th, teachers have been working to rule, with talks ongoing. APSEA teachers are governed by a different contract, and are not in a dispute with our employer, but many parts of the Teachers' Provincial Agreement will affect us, and we continue to watch the developments closely.

October is typically inservice time at APSEA, and 2016 was no exception. Staff came together to attend various presentations, including that of guest speaker Kathryn Kreimeyer, who focused on the topic of social competence. Dr. Kreimeyer is an associate professor in the Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies within the University of Arizona's College of Education. One component of her presentation that was discussed heavily over breaks and at lunch was the idea of unequal friendships. This was an eye-opening moment for many staff members, who have (with the best intentions) paired the Deaf student with a "buddy" to help them. Many teachers agreed that they hadn't really considered before how unequal this made the partnership. Dr Kreimeyer was a wonderful presenter and people all agreed that her sessions provided a great deal of food for thought.

APSEA's Educational Interpreter Consultant, Amy Parsons, also hosted a session on student self-advocacy. Amy is Deaf herself, and shared many personal experiences. She encouraged staff to think about ways to foster more independence in students. In a later session she also shared an overview of a document she has been working on in collaboration with members of the Deaf community. Meant to help students navigate the transition from high school to postsecondary education and/or the working world, it contains information on accessing post-secondary funding, hiring interpreters, identifying different organizations of support, and obtaining general financial information, all in Deaf friendly language.

DHH teachers in this area are very fortunate to have access to funding that allows them to attend various professional development opportunities. This past June, four teachers travelled to Denver, Colorado to attend the AG Bell Conference. During the fall inservice, they shared information they had learned on topics such as self-advocacy and conversational repair strategies, the balance between formal and functional assessment tools, as well as updated research into telepractice and intensive phonological awareness training.

One very appreciated and well utilized feature that APSEA offers is its Short Term Programs (STPs). During the two referral periods each year, APSEA teachers work with school staff and families to identify needs that might not be

able to be addressed in a student's home school. These are written up as smart, specific goals, and submitted to provincial supervisors for processing. Students are then grouped according to need and age, and travel to the ASPEA Centre in Halifax to participate. Generally STPs last a week, with students staying overnight in residence. However, shorter programs are being offered for younger students, and longer programs are at times offered for students who travel a great distance. APSEA has hosted students from all four Atlantic provinces, and Nunavut! Some of the recurring themes seen in STPs include self-advocacy and equipment care, interpreter use, career exploration, intensive language, interpersonal relationships, and functional life skills.

For the first time in a number of years, APSEA has a Student and Family Counsellor working in Nova Scotia. Janice Gavin has an M.Ed in both Deaf Education and Counselling. She works with families, students, school staff and APSEA itinerant teachers to supporting those children or families who are identified as having a need. Her role keeps her very busy, travelling around the province. Her counterpart in New Brunswick, Patrick Daley, provides the same support to students and families there.

MAEDHH continues to be active, and has followed through on the initiatives it began last year. Webinars were held at various times throughout the year and were well received. The topics of the webinars varied based on staff expertise and interest. A session in December allowed members to share winter and holiday themed activities. In March, MAEDHH vice president Lisa Weir walked members through the use of Smart Board and demonstrated some fun activities that could be adapted for many different targets. MAEDHH also maintains a Pinterest board where teachers can share activities, and had a very successful first year with a mentorship program.

As with other areas in the country, the Maritimes continue to face teacher shortages. Staff members have been working hard to cover these caseloads, and telepractice is one approach being used. In an effort to encourage more teachers to pursue an M.Ed in Deaf Education, the APSEA Board of Directors made available three scholarships to Mount Saint Vincent University, with an attached three year return-of-service agreement. The recipients of these scholarships have now been selected. Seven new DHH teachers have been hired in the past 12 months.

Dana MacLeod, Maritimes Regional Director

CAEDHH Manitoba Report

Greetings from the flatlands!

This year for CAEDHH-Manitoba has been a slower one. There are many reasons for this. The board, myself included, is relatively new and we are finding our way, making some mistakes, and relying on those who came before us. Sounds a lot like learning to me! Perfect for a group of educators.

Being a member of a professional organization has always been important to me. In addition to being a teacher I am a nationally certified interpreter and continue to maintain an annual professional membership with the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC). About 15 years ago I was involved with the local interpreting chapter, MAVLI. At that time we were facing a decline in membership, had very few professional development opportunities and the members in good standing were there out of custom and perhaps following their own sense of professional ethics rather than for personal or professional satisfaction. For other CAEDHH chapters who are struggling to maintain membership this may sound familiar. A cursory survey of local educators who remain non-members of CAEDHH revealed the recurrent theme of “What’s in it for me?”

This question lead me to research (okay, okay, I did a Google search) the benefits of membership in any professional association. Here are a few that were the most recurring:

- 1) Conferences – Professional development opportunities are ranked as one of the top benefits of professional association membership.
- 2) Industry Standards – CAEDHH’s newly revised criteria for Teacher of the Deaf certification is a testament to hard working individuals who have worked diligently to ensure the standards for professional certification remain just and attainable.
- 3) Codes of Ethics – a code of conduct or ethics is a valuable tool that professionals can use to guide them in practice.
- 4) Networking – professional membership can afford opportunities for networking.

To gain perspective, I also sought out disadvantages to membership in a professional association. The top disadvantages are:

- 1) Fees – fees are a deterrent for some individuals. I would think that might be ameliorated if the member received or perceived a return on investment (i.e. “What’s in it for me?”)

- 2) Time – I am so grateful for the time that the CAEDHH national and provincial chapters have taken to ensure the success of the organization. The reality is that for many people time is a factor in their willingness and ability to participate in professional associations.
- 3) Socializing – People who join professional memberships report that they prefer to maintain boundaries between social events and professional associations. People reported not wanting to engage in social activities as part of a professional association.
- 4) Pressure – Lastly, people explain that membership in a professional association leads to pressure to become involved in committees and other volunteer opportunities that they are not interested in but feel pressured into.

This year, CAEDHH-MB endeavors to examine these issues and make changes to keep our current membership and, perhaps, encourage lapsed members back into the professional fold.

The field of Deaf education is a moving target. It is imperative that teachers have opportunities to learn about common issues in the field including: how to teach late language learners, the effects of language deprivation, technological advancements in listening devices, and so forth. CAEDHH-MB will be starting a PLC (professional learning community) and the first meeting will be in February 2017. The topic will be Manipulative Visual Language (MVL) in the classroom. There will also be short workshops on technology and applications in the classroom.

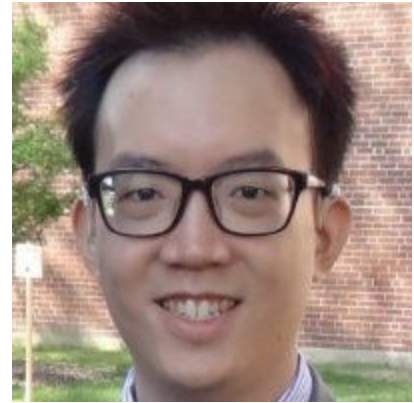
I wish you all a great year and look forward to reading what is happening in CAEDHH across the nation.

Liana Price, CAEDHH-MB

Editor's Note: In the absence of a Manitoba Regional Director, the editors asked Manitoba's president to submit a regional report on the affiliate's behalf

Pacific Regional Director's Report

Hello fellow CAEDHH members. CAEDHH-BC currently has 80 members (including full, associate, retired, student, and honorary members). Despite the increase in the membership, there are two vacant positions in the Executive: President and Treasurer. This is of utmost concern as these are two integral positions in maintaining the organization. Members are invited to attend the Executive meetings to “get a feel” of the operations. It is hoped that through this initiative we will find the people to take the reins before the next AGM in October.



As part of our approach to receive feedback and suggestions from members, CAEDHH-BC recently created an initiative in which a survey will be sent out to get information about itinerant caseloads, best practices, and quality of services. Gathering this data will help towards in forming series of recommendations which we hope to share with the B.C. Ministry of Education.

Our annual fall conference took place on October 21st, 2016. We had a great turnout of attendees to the point that we had a wait list due to capacity being full, amongst them parents who were eager to know what the latest best practices are. This year we had two distinguished speakers: Lynne Price from Supporting Students with Hearing Loss and Charlotte Enns from University of Manitoba. The theme of the conference was the Reading-Writing-Literacy Connection. Lynne provided practical strategies in using students' current levels of performance to develop Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals, and determine the scope of services. Many of the attendees were happy to obtain copies of her publications. Charlotte focused on the ASL perspective in contributing to literacy and language development, which was also well received. ASL workshops were given for those interested in picking up the language, most of them parents and educational assistants. All in all, it was a fantastic conference!

Bowen Tang, Pacific Regional Director

From Mexico to Canada: A Journey in Language Acquisition



The current study provided a unique opportunity to examine language acquisition and the role it can play in facilitating later learning in children. A group of deaf students, relatively isolated from accessible exposure to any language during their preschool years, were placed in a self-contained classroom focused on teaching language rather than regular curricular content. This specialized situation also provided an opportunity to monitor

American Sign Language (ASL) development in a late-exposure group of learners.

Background

Bilingual programming for deaf students has been developed as an alternative approach to emphasizing only spoken language skills. Bilingual programming for deaf children requires that they first develop proficiency in a natural signed language, such as ASL, before facilitating acquisition of a spoken/written language, such as English, as a second language. The strategy of learning ASL first is supported by research with hearing bilingual children who have not established a clear first language before entering school. In a study involving pre-schoolers from Spanish homes, Cummins (1984) concludes:

...for minority students who are academically at risk, strong promotion of first language conceptual skills may be more effective than either a half-hearted bilingual approach or a monolingual English “immersion” approach. (p. 149)

The assumption that two separate language systems are linked to a common conceptual core plays a significant role in bilingual educational programs, because it suggests a common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 1984). It also implies that experience with either language can promote the proficiency underlying *both* languages. The idea that two languages are linked to a common conceptual core, and the importance of establishing a language base as a critical component for later learning (Hart & Risley, 1999), form the theoretical framework for this study. Within this context the primary objectives of the study were to: 1) assess the children’s language skills, in both ASL and English, at

the beginning and end of the school year, 2) monitor the children's participation and interaction during regular classroom activities throughout the year, and 3) consider the strategies and interactions, with teachers and peers, that most significantly influenced the children's language development.

Method

This qualitative research study took place in a public school within a rural community in Western Canada with a high incidence of Mexican Mennonite immigrants. It is important to note that the community was initially established by Mennonite settlers and continues to have a high incidence of citizens affiliated with this group. Mennonites are primarily defined by their religious beliefs, which include pacifism, baptism by choice, and living simply (Roth, 2005).

In order to uphold these beliefs Mennonites have chosen or been forced to move to various locations throughout the world. The first Mennonite settlers in this Western Canadian community arrived from Russia during the 1890s to escape military duty and live according to their beliefs (Werner, 2006). Over the next few decades, they farmed the land and became prosperous. As a result, some members of the community felt they were becoming too worldly and adopting the materialistic values of Canadian society. This prompted some of them



to immigrate to Mexico in the 1950s so they could live more simply and more separately (Werner, 2006). Although the Mexican Mennonites were free to practice their religion, they struggled with farming and other industry and have generally lived in poverty, with limited access to education and health care (Macias & Torres, 2000). These conditions have resulted in an increase of Mexican Mennonites returning to their families in Canada over the past decade. It is within this context that the current study was initiated. Although the families discussed here recently immigrated to Canada from Mexico, they moved to a community with many members who shared their religious beliefs and cultural values, including speaking a similar dialect of German (locally referred to as "Plautdietsch", or Low German).

Description of the Families:

The primary participants in this study are five deaf children from three families (two of the families include two deaf siblings) aged between 5 and 8 years. All of the families immigrated to Canada within the three years prior to the initiation of the study. For all of the families, Low German is the first language and the language used within the home.

The first family had been in Canada the longest as it was their third year in the country when the study began. The family consisted of mother, father, and two children, both of whom were deaf. The daughter, Susanna, was 8 years

old and the son, Julio, was 5 years old. Susanna also had cerebral palsy affecting the motor movements of her limbs on the right side, and a seizure disorder that required treatment through surgery (shunt placement) and medication.

The second family was currently in their second year of living in Canada. This family also consisted of a mother, father, and two children, both of whom were deaf. The daughter, Katya, was 7 years old and the son, Lukas, was 5 years old.

The third family was only in their first year of living in Canada when the study began. This family consisted of a mother, father, and ten children; however, three of the adult siblings were still living in Mexico. The deaf son, Herman, was the eighth child in the family and was 6 years old.

Description of School Program:

The primary goal of the specialized classroom within a regular elementary school, was to develop the students' ASL skills. Classroom activities were organized to emphasize language development and interaction and curricular goals were only addressed secondarily within this language-rich framework. The self-contained classroom was staffed with a qualified teacher of the deaf and an educational assistant who were both hearing and fluent in ASL. Other supports included a consultant for deaf and hard of hearing students, educational interpreting consultants, a speech-language pathologist, a resource teacher, and the family liaison worker.

Data Collection:

The study involved two types of research tasks. These included individual language assessments conducted in one-to-one situations with the researcher at the beginning and end of the study (October and June), and videotaped observations of regular classroom activities throughout the year.

The individual assessments of students measured both their skills in written English as well as American Sign Language (ASL). The assessment measures included:

- a) *Test of Reading Ability (TERA-D/HH)* (Reid, Hresko & Hammill, 1991),
- b) ASL Expressive Skills – two tasks (story retelling based on a wordless picture book; action retelling to elicit classifiers, based on a wordless cartoon video),
- c) ASL Receptive Skills – two tasks (viewing a videotaped ASL story and responding to comprehension questions; matching pictures to signed descriptions using ASL classifiers).

The classroom observations occurred approximately once/month from October to May (8 sessions) and extended over the entire school day (9:00 am – 3:30 pm). Although these visits/observations were arranged with staff ahead of time, they were asked to implement their regular classroom activities throughout the day. The students and teachers

quickly became quite unaware of the video camera and it was felt that these observations accurately captured the natural environment of the classroom.



Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study will be reported and discussed in four different areas: 1) the changes in ASL skills of the five children, 2) the changes in English (early reading) skills of the five children, 3) the language facilitation strategies and interaction methods used by the teacher and teaching assistant in the classroom, and 4) the influence of peer interaction on the children's language development.

Changes in ASL Skills:

The results from the language assessments indicated significant improvements in all of the children's ASL skills. These results were not surprising as ASL was the language of instruction in the classroom and many activities were geared to developing the children's skills in this area.

The conclusion of initial testing regarding the narrative skills of the children was that all had a sense of story and a keen interest to communicate, but only Susanna and Katya were able to do so through the use of ASL signs and simple sentences. The results from the final assessment show quite a different picture – all five children were now able to retell the story using ASL sentences and grammatical markers. In particular, Katya readily told the story without any prompting or encouragement from the examiner and used short, simple sentences, three or four signs in length. Julio and Lukas continued to use mainly single signs and two-sign phrases to retell the story, but they included more complex vocabulary (such as "PRETEND", "WET", "BATH MUST" and "GARBAGE THROW"), and incorporated a variety of classifiers to represent the actions of the characters in the story. Julio was also observed to vocalize frequently and loudly while signing in the initial testing, but this decreased significantly in the final assessment, indicating that he now had the signs to express himself more effectively and did not need to supplement his gestures with his voice. Herman's version of the story included single signs, but he also used classifiers to show movement and the actions of the characters. Even Susanna, whose second retelling was generally quite similar to how she expressed herself in the initial testing, showed an increase in the length and completeness of her narrative, used a greater variety of signs, and included more grammatical markers in her final version of the story.

The purpose of the cartoon retelling task was to elicit the use of classifiers to show the size and shape of objects and the actions of the characters. The most impressive gains in terms of classifier use were demonstrated by Katya and Lukas (see Table 1), with gains of 27 and 22 respectively. They both started with minimal understanding and use of

these structures at the time of the initial assessment, but clearly were effective users of a variety of different



classifiers (locative, semantic, plural, body part, instrument - showing how the object is used by the hands, and descriptive – showing size and shape) at the time of the final testing eight months later. Although Julio and Herman only increased the number of classifiers they used by one and two, respectively, they did show gains in the variety and quality of their descriptions. Julio used more plural classifiers and body part classifiers (showing action with part of his own body), and less semantic classifiers (showing

action without a clear handshape). Previously Herman’s signing was hard to understand – fast movements and the handshapes were not clear. In the final assessment he used body part, locative, and plural classifiers and his signing was more clear and accurate.

Table 1: Expressive Use of ASL Classifiers

Child	Initial Score	Final Score	Gain
Susanna	12	12*	0
Julio	13	14 (+ variety)	1
Katya	0	27	27
Lukas	5	27	22
Herman	8 (unclear)	10	2

- Health concerns may have influenced results on final testing scores.

Although the gains shown in ASL receptive skills through the assessment tasks were generally low, this appeared to be a result of these tasks being at too high a level for some of the students. The basic skills of attending to signing and making eye contact with signers was the starting point for Julio, Lukas, and Herman, and growth in these areas was not reflected in their test scores. The children needed to learn that signing represented meaningful communication and how to use it to actively participate and respond during conversation.

Informally, the children were noted to express themselves and have their needs met more effectively. They moved from using the occasional sign within a flurry of gestures, to expressing themselves in complete sentences or even longer narratives. Another observable change in the language of the students was with regard to the purpose of their interactions. Initially the conversations were very practical – making or responding to requests for help, asking for or providing information, or giving directions. However, gradually the children used language to express their feelings, their opinions, likes and dislikes, and to make jokes.

Changes in English Skills:

Although ASL development was expected, what was also remarkable was the significant improvement noted in the children’s English (early reading) skills, despite limited emphasis in this area within classroom activities. A summary of initial and final raw scores on the *TERA-D/HH* (with age equivalencies in brackets) is presented in Table 2. The initial testing indicated that the three boys, Julio, Lukas, and Herman, were all at the pre-literacy stage (identifying letters and some environmental print), but not yet able to recognize words. They all showed significant improvements in their final scores, with Julio and Lukas gaining a year and Herman 2 years, to represent age-appropriate functioning when compared to other deaf/hard of hearing children.

Katya, who demonstrated the greatest gains in her ASL development, also displayed the greatest gains in her written English skills. Her age equivalency improved by over two years in the 7 months between testing and she was functioning within the average range for deaf/hard of hearing children her age by the final testing.

Table 2: Comparison of Scores on the *Test of Early Reading Abilities – D/HH*

Child	Initial Score	Final Score	Gain
Susanna	22 (7;0)	23 (7;3)*	1 (3 months)
Julio	7 (5;0)	14 (6;0)	7 (1 year)
Katya	13 (6;0)	27 (8;6)	14 (2 ½ years)
Lukas	4 (4;6)	12 (5;6)	8 (1 year)
Herman	2 (4;0)	13 (6;0)	11 (2 years)

- Health concerns may have influenced results on final testing scores.

Language Facilitation Strategies Used in the Classroom:

As previously mentioned, the primary focus of classroom activities was language development. Although some curricular concepts were incorporated into the content, these did not drive the teaching and learning. There were five general language facilitation strategies that were observed to contribute to the children’s language learning:

- a) Vocabulary Development – using classroom themes and routines for the systematic repetition of words/signs
- b) Expansion – sensitivity to the children’s attempts to communicate or initiate interaction to build more sophisticated ways to express ideas and requests
- c) Teaching Grammatical Markers – action stories to develop spatial verbs/classifiers; missing information to ask questions; false or impossible statements for negatives; and handshape games (signs using the same handshape)
- d) Comprehension – explicit teaching to attend to signing and making eye contact
- e) Exposure to Print – written labels, names; daily calendar; classroom books; use of school library; story time (connections between ASL and written English).

Influence of Peer Interactions:

The students in this class were not only at a lower language level than their hearing peers, but as a result of their limited language were also lacking many age-appropriate social skills. The opportunity to learn basic behaviours, like sitting, attending, imitating, and turn-taking within a safe and structured environment, made the development of these skills a positive experience and did not draw attention to the students as “different”. Since the self-contained classroom was located within a regular school, the students did have opportunities to interact with other peers in the hallways, during recess and lunch, and in their integrated physical education classes. The confidence the students developed through controlled interaction in their classroom, allowed them to observe and learn general school behaviours in the larger context, such as lining up, raising hands, following directions, and respecting personal space.

A good example of how students were empowered to interact in new ways was observed during the daily calendar activity. Lukas spontaneously took over the role of teacher and systematically asked each student to guess which card (the choices were “Today”, “Yesterday”, and “Tomorrow”) he held in his hand. He had seen this modeled by the teacher for several weeks and was ready to do it himself. This initiated the regular use of student leaders during calendar activities within the classroom.

Conclusion

The features that defined a positive language learning environment in this study included:

- a) immersion in the target language (ASL) – school, family ASL classes,
- b) role models and peers – Deaf adults, monthly visits to the Deaf school
- c) language facilitation strategies – naturalistic and explicit teaching
- d) family support – Liaison Worker fluent in Low German to assist with translation, appointments, respite, making connections between families.

The findings from this study emphasize that until deaf children have the opportunity to acquire language skills, we cannot expect them to integrate and develop academically within regular classrooms. The findings also show that when deaf children are provided with a positive language learning environment we can expect them to develop their language skills, but will also see gains in their social, cognitive, and literacy abilities. All children require exposure to an accessible language in order to develop the foundation for social, cognitive, and literacy learning.

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CAEDHH Certification Standards Revision

Following a lengthy and comprehensive review, we would like to announce the launch of the revised CAEDHH Certification Standards (Nov, 2016). The newly revised Certification Standards have been posted online at www.caedhh.ca. We invite you all to please take a look.

The 2016 review of the Certification Standards came at the recommendation of the review committee following the 2009 revision. Lead by Dr. Mary Ann Bibby, the committee included Dr. Janet Jamieson, Maureen Clarke, and Susan Sanger. The review took place over eighteen months, and we were guided in the process by colleagues, heads of university teacher preparation programs, and leaders in the field. The final document was submitted to CAEDHH National in January, 2017.

In the process of reviewing the Certification Standards, the Certification Standards Review Committee had three main goals:

1. To develop a document that would identify the core competencies required of beginning teachers working in the field of education for students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.
2. To accurately reflect current and evolving trends in our field, and in university teacher preparation programs for teachers seeking to specialize in education for students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.
3. To uphold, without compromise, the core values to which CAEDHH adheres in order to maintain the high professional standard for which teachers of students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing in Canada are recognized.

Over the coming months, a user-friendly application form providing a framework for documenting coursework and practicum experiences according to individual circumstances will be developed by the Certification Committee. A revised application form will give all graduates of university teacher preparation programs across Canada the opportunity to meet CAEDHH Certification Standards.

We believe that the CAEDHH Certification Standards are a cornerstone of our professional association. We encourage all of our colleagues to become CAEDHH Certified. CAEDHH Certification is recognized as a standard for specialized preparation, skills, and qualifications of teachers working in our field. CAEDHH Certification is recognized internationally, and is required by many provincial education jurisdictions.

Members of the Certification Committee are available to work with you in applying for certification. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Jamieson, Maureen Clarke, and Susan Sanger

Please visit www.caedhh.ca to view the revised CAEDHH Certification Standards.