British Association of Teachers of the Deaf

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From your editor

Communication is the cornerstone of the work of all Teachers of the Deaf and others working with deaf children and young people. This edition of the Magazine looks at a range of aspects of this interesting and ever-changing topic, set in context by the lead article from Sue Archbold and Bencie Woll and by an evaluation of Total Communication in 2012 by Connie Mayer, all highly respected professionals in the world of deaf education. The subjects considered include monitoring very early communication in young deaf children, addressing children's changing communication needs in a school for the deaf, deaf children with English as an additional language and also those with additional needs, the use of technology, and the role of communication in the deaf curriculum. Other articles look at it from a methodological point of view, including Auditory Verbal Therapy, Cued Speech, Total Communication and sign bilingualism.

The other features address a wide range of topics as usual, including concerns about mainstream support, the exciting work of Life and Deaf 2 and transitions in audiological services. One or more of the articles might stimulate you to write a letter or article in response and this is always welcome. Furthermore, we are always very keen to hear how you are responding to the challenging changes in the educational landscape which are affecting us all.

Please send any ideas, letters or articles for consideration to the Magazine Editor.

Forthcoming topics

May	Conference edition – Shaping sensory support for the future
September	Deaf education around the world
November	Continuing professional development
January 2013	The role of the educational audiologist
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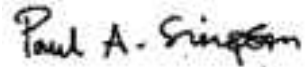

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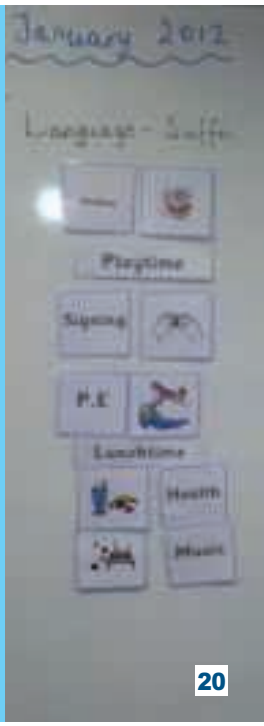
Communication



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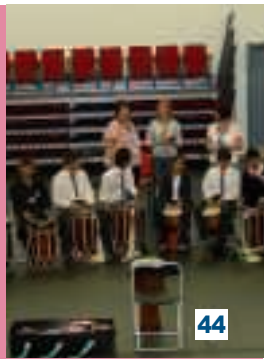
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Achieving potential

As **Karen Taylor** takes up the presidential reins, she urges us to remember our original motivation for becoming Teachers of the Deaf and to keep the focus on promoting excellence for deaf children

As President Elect I have been part of Steering Group for the last two years and had the opportunity to see the huge amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the Association going; not only from Paul Simpson, who does a fantastic job as our Executive Officer, but also from the members of the National Executive Council and the regional committees who all give their time voluntarily. BATOD relies on professionals wanting to get involved and I would thoroughly recommend it, not only because it promotes our profession as Teachers of the Deaf, but because it gives members opportunities to network and receive support from each other on both a formal and informal basis. As Gary Anderson said in his last presidential address, we really do have fun as well as work hard!

I cannot take over as President without saying a huge thank you to Gary for steering us through the last two years. 'Stronger together' has been an excellent vision and I have no doubt we have all had a stronger, more influential 'voice' by developing close links with other organisations in areas where we have mutual interests and goals. We will continue to strengthen these links and 'stronger together' will be an important part of our vision for the future.

So, to the future…. In preparation for my two years as President I went back to what inspired me to become a Teacher of the Deaf and to join BATOD, and I wondered what motivated others to take a similar path. This was partly prompted by the 'virtual interview' I did for Liz Read-Beadle, which you can read in the next Magazine. My own inspiration came from my childhood and my cousin Stuart, who was born deaf and autistic, and from listening to my aunt describe how her ToD became her 'lifeline' at that time.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the retirement of one of our ToDs in Norfolk who celebrated 37 years in the teaching profession and was recollecting a time when there were no computers and chalk was rationed! The very next day I had the honour of talking to ToDs in their first year of training and listening to what motivated them to join the profession.

When there are so many changes it is sometimes difficult to hold on to what inspired you to become a ToD, but one of the many important reasons BATOD exists is to support all professionals in our field in keeping their focus on promoting excellence for the education of deaf children and young people. BATOD can represent you in so many different ways, enabling you to focus on the day job, knowing that support is never far away – 'may the force be with you'.

Achieving potential as an Association

BATOD will continue to move forward, looking at new ways of working using the latest technology to support, encourage and inspire you to take as much of an active role in the organisation as you feel you can. That way we get to hear what you are saying and thinking and we can accurately represent your views. We are trialling Google groups and Facebook and will be revamping the BATOD website. These new ways of working should enable us to communicate with you more effectively and give the National Executive Council workstreams a more cost-efficient mode of communication outside regular meetings. The following themes will continue to ensure that your views are represented at all levels:

- Working within BATOD
- Working with government
- Working with partners.

Achieving potential for deaf children and young people

Sharing good practice is essential if we are to move forward as a profession. We need more evidence-based practice and research so that we can help the children and young people we support to achieve their potential. This will be one of the priorities over the coming years.

Good practice can also be shared across borders with other countries and we will be strengthening our international links to facilitate this.

We have a great profession and our members are hugely dedicated to achieving excellence in the education of deaf children and young people. A period of massive change is ahead of us and that means BATOD will need to be flexible and adapt to meet the needs of Teachers of the Deaf across the UK so that they can continue to provide inspirational support and guidance to deaf children and young people and secure a brighter future for us all.

Communication choices – in 2012...

We live in rapidly changing times when parents of deaf children are faced with more communication choices than ever, so, ask Bencie Woll and Sue Archbold, is it time to revise some of the communication policies of our educational services to reflect current research?

Choices of communication approaches for deaf children have long been highly contentious. There is a long list of approaches for parents to consider: sign bilingualism, natural oralism, structured oralism, Total Communication to name but a few. Informed choice for parents may be an added stress at a time when they are vulnerable – or as one parent put it, 'Won't someone let me communicate with my child?'

We know that hearing neonates arrive with a range of auditory experience – hearing newborns can 'remember' what they have heard before birth, preferring their mother's voice, and can distinguish native from non-native speech based on prosody alone. From the first days of life, they are able to detect small differences in speech sounds, and this ability changes as infants are exposed to native language. During the first year of life, children acquire the phonology of their 'home' language, gradually producing speech-like sounds until, by the end of the first year, the first words appear within the babbling sequences.

This early auditory development facilitates the development of the early communication skills of shared attention and referencing, and of 'conversational' turn-taking – crucial skills on which to base later language learning and cognitive development. Recent research shows that these conversational abilities may occur in hearing children earlier than previously thought – in the first few months of life. However, this process is not reliant on audition alone. Infants are able to follow eye gaze from six months and pointing soon after that.

The integration of visual, auditory and motor stimuli is essential to the process of language learning and it can be easy to overemphasise the role of hearing in spoken language acquisition and to ignore the importance of concurrent visual information in spoken communication. The visual context and gesture provide information, while speechreading, integrating the visual components of speech, including lip-reading and facial clues, has been shown to give visual access to spoken language structure and to complement auditory processing.

What of the impact of deafness on this crucial early development of language? Over 95% of deaf children are born to hearing families and the language of the home is likely to be a spoken one. With the implementation of Newborn Hearing Screening and earlier fitting of hearing aids and cochlear implants, access to spoken language becomes more possible than ever before. However, even deaf children fitted with hearing aids or implants early in life miss a significant part of the normal pattern of communication and language development described earlier.

For many years it appeared that there was a once-and-for-all choice to be made about communication, but research with children following cochlear implantation shows that communication choices may change over time, and as Ketil Eidsaunet describes in his article on 'communication soup' (page 17), many deaf children are today becoming fluent in several languages, which may include sign language.

Research on the development of the brain demonstrates the importance of acquisition of a first language within the normal time frame. It also indicates that bilingual or multilingual language development has positive lifelong consequences for cognitive flexibility. In relation to sign language acquisition, it is now clear that the same higher brain areas are used for both spoken and sign language, with the exception of the primary auditory cortex. Other studies have found that one of the best predictors of subsequent literacy for both deaf and hearing children is speechreading ability. Researchers need to do more to ensure that their findings are shared with parents, educators and other professionals involved in supporting deaf children, and educational policies need to take such findings into account. Today's deaf children are an even more diverse group than in the past, with diverse needs; it is timely for education services to reconsider their policies on communication. Flexibility – for different children and for the same child over time and in different circumstances – is essential to ensure that provision meets individual children's needs and creates the best outcomes for all children.

Bencie Woll is the Director of DCAL and Sue Archbold is the Chief Executive of The Ear Foundation.

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From communication to language

How can we help deaf children to acquire the necessary skills? Ros Herman and Jane Thomas investigate

Communication concerns the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. Communication can often take place entirely without language; for example, a baby's cries can communicate distress or need to the carer, but we would not call this language. Similarly, our tone of voice or use of gesture can be communicative, but taken alone they do not constitute language. By 'language', we mean *symbolic* communication, where symbols are used to refer to things in the real world. These symbols may be the words of a spoken language or the signs of a sign language.

Although there are some signs/words that look or sound like their referent, for example signs like BALL and words such as 'splash', for the most part, the link between word/sign and referent is completely arbitrary. For example, there is no particular reason why a four-legged loyal pet should be called 'dog' or signed DOG, yet these are the terms that communities of language users have implicitly agreed on. Children who are members of a language community must acquire these arbitrary symbols – they must learn what words and signs mean and how to produce them accurately and at the appropriate time. They must also master the grammatical rules of the language, which allow users to modify and combine the units of the language, leading to the understanding and expression of more complex meanings.

So how does a young child manage the challenge of going beyond basic communication to master the intricacies of language? As Judy Kegl once said in an inspiring talk about deaf children learning language in Nicaragua, you have the raw ingredients – vegetables, seasonings, water – but when is it soup?

Children are predisposed to be social and look at faces

Children learn best when they have opportunities to experience language in action and to try out their developing skills from a very early age, when they are developmentally ideally suited to do so. In practice, this takes place from birth, when parents and carers naturally engage babies in conversation, speaking to them regularly and laying the foundations for later learning. Parents spend time looking at their infant, in turn commenting on what the child does and then responding on the child's behalf. This teaches the basic understanding that language takes place between people during face-to-face interaction and that conversational partners take turns, initiating and responding to each other. The timing of these first interactions is ideal – children are predisposed to be social and look at faces; they are ready to learn the rules of engagement for language before they become mobile and are able to divert their attention to other activities.

Parents engage in child-friendly activities such as playing, singing and looking at books with their children – all designed to provide further opportunities for language exposure and practice. Later, as children produce their first attempts at the sounds of language, parents respond by babbling back to them, providing an opportunity for the child subconsciously to compare his or her own sound production with that of the adult. As first words appear, parents focus on what the child is trying to say, rather than how it is said. They repeat the child's utterance and by modelling an adult version, encourage further development.

Parents serve as language models, demonstrating how language is used in context

As children grow, parents adjust to their developing language skills by using more complex language. Parents serve as language models, demonstrating how language is used in context, supplemented by other key family members such as grandparents, siblings and, later on, children and adults outside the family setting. Older children learn much through incidental learning, ie overhearing other people talk, as well as from being spoken to directly.

So how do we help a deaf child to progress beyond basic communication to acquire language? When deafness is identified at birth and effective amplification is used well, the crucial early months and years for language learning can be maximised. However, delays in diagnosis and late intervention can reduce the critical period for language acquisition with potentially long-lasting consequences, not only for language but also for literacy and later academic learning. In such cases, language exposure must be optimised and parents supported to ensure that they provide an enhanced environment for language learning from the start.

Many parents communicate effectively with their deaf child, but some need help to go beyond basic

communication in order to stretch their child's language development. They need encouragement to use a wider vocabulary (for example, 'disappointed' and 'relieved' rather than 'sad' and 'happy'), and more advanced grammar (for example, 'can you fetch your coat' rather than 'get your coat'). Deaf children need opportunities to over-learn new vocabulary in order to consolidate it. They need to be taught to attend to others' conversations as a further source of language input. The aim for all deaf children is for them to start school ready to acquire knowledge with age-appropriate language skills, rather than lagging behind from the outset. Age-appropriate language paves the way to literacy, and reading in turn fuels further language development.

For the small number of deaf children with deaf parents who sign, language development generally proceeds in much the same way as it does in hearing children from hearing families. The foundations need to be laid early through established turn-taking, and since turns need to be signalled visually, encouraging children's visual attention is crucial. Child sign language users require regular opportunities to communicate with other sign language users, plus exposure to good language models to extend their learning. Many deaf families introduce children to English through sharing books, presenting signs in English word order accompanied by lip patterns. Reading English text provides an ideal opportunity to explain differences between English and BSL, starting the process of becoming bilingual.

Good language skills within the family are vital to maintaining healthy family relationships

For hearing families who use sign language with their deaf child, it is the responsibility of intervention services to support the development of strong sign language skills within the entire family. A basic sign vocabulary is not enough – this may facilitate early communication, but *language* cannot develop without fluent sign language input. The deaf signing child in a hearing family will therefore additionally need regular access to adults who are native signers and to other children who sign, in order to observe sign language in use and benefit from incidental learning. Good language skills within the family are vital to maintaining healthy family relationships; access to adult language models and a peer group of signers is crucial for the development of a healthy identity.

Speech and language therapists are knowledgeable about the process of spoken language acquisition in typically developing children and what to expect at different ages and stages of development. They study the ways in which speech and language development can go awry, and why this may occur.

Families can be supported to implement strategies that enhance early language development

Therapists who have undertaken further specialist training are also aware of the growing body of research on sign language acquisition, the linguistic structure of sign languages and research into bilingualism. They work collaboratively with parents and the team of professionals surrounding the deaf child, using this knowledge to pinpoint where an individual child is in his or her spoken and/or sign language development and to guide the child to the next stage in development. In this way, families can be supported to implement strategies that enhance early language development and more advanced language skills and deaf children can be helped to achieve their potential.

Ros Herman is a senior lecturer in the Department of Language and Communication Science at City University London and Jane Thomas was formerly a senior speech and language therapist.

A role for Total Communication in 2012?

Connie Mayer seeks to explain the benefits of this comprehensive communication approach

'Total Communication' (TC) is arguably one of the most misunderstood terms in the field of deaf education. These misunderstandings relate both to the definition of the term and to the ways in which it has traditionally been realised in practice. Questions have been raised as to whether TC is still relevant following moves to models of sign bilingual education, and more recently in the context of earlier intervention as a consequence of universal newborn hearing screening and improvements in amplification technologies, including cochlear implants (CIs).

The nature of Total Communication

Total Communication was introduced to the field in the 1970s at a time when providing access to spoken language for learners with profound hearing loss via the auditory channel alone was extremely challenging. The thinking was that educators could exploit a range of modalities (speech, sign, print) alone – or in combination – for communication and language development. In this sense it should be viewed not as a methodology but rather as a philosophical approach in which access to language by whatever means possible is paramount. Because spoken language was an aspect of this approach, it also included the use of both personal and group amplification.

Although it is often described as 'speaking and signing at the same time' or 'simultaneous communication' (SC), it must be emphasised that this is not an accurate description of TC, and the two terms are not synonymous. TC is much more flexible than SC in that it allows for speaking only, signing only, or speaking and signing at the same time, depending on the communication needs of the learner.

Total Communication in practice

One of the most appealing aspects of a Total Communication approach lies in its flexibility. In allowing for the use of a range of modes for developing communication and language, it can be implemented in practice in ways that best meet the needs of individual deaf learners. For example, the teacher may sign and speak when working with the group and use only spoken language when interacting with a single child who has more auditory potential. Or there might be more emphasis placed on using elements of signed English (for example, markers for verb endings) in a reading/writing lesson.

One of the ongoing challenges to implementing a TC approach has been the lack of teachers who are skilled at implementing it – especially in knowing how to combine the modes effectively. Even though it has been an aspect of deaf education for more than 30 years, it is not often a focus in teacher education programmes.

There are also misperceptions on the part of some individuals as to the extent that learners can understand signed forms of English, the relative roles played by signed and spoken language and the extent to which amplification is used. These misunderstandings are reinforced as TC does tend to 'look different' in practice, depending on the context. While this could be viewed as a product of the flexible nature of the approach, it is often seen as a weakness rather than as a strength.

Arguments have even been made that because there is so much misunderstanding of the term TC, the approach should be renamed. Suggestions have been made to call it a multi-modal or a comprehensive approach as these are seen as more suitably capturing the essence of the philosophy.

Moving forward

In contrast to the era when TC was first introduced, the majority of deaf children in 2012 are now able meaningfully to access spoken language through the use of CIs and improved hearing aids. That said there continue to be learners for whom the auditory channel must be supported by visual input (for example, speechreading or signed language) for language to be acquired. Or it may be the case that they need this visual support at certain stages of their development (for example, before implantation) or in certain communication situations (for example, in a poor listening environment such as a mainstream classroom).

It could be argued that TC is a perfect fit to meet the needs of this population of deaf learners. Its flexibility with respect to modality allows teachers to support spoken language input with sign to the extent that is needed for that learner. The key point here is that the signed input can be accompanied

by voice – an expectation for learners who are able to access language via their CIs or hearing aids. 'Voice off' signing is not seen as a preferred educational option for these groups.

The models below provide a way of thinking about the ways in which language and modality are realised in a TC approach. In each case, 'A' refers to auditory (for example, spoken) input and 'V' refers to visual (for example, signed) input. Model 1 has often been used to describe the ways in which spoken and signed language are used for communication in the deaf community and in educational approaches – moving on a continuum from spoken English to British Sign Language (BSL), aligning English with the auditory and BSL with the visual. In this way language and modality are represented on the same continuum.

Model 1 – Combining language and modality

A_____V

English **BSL**

Using this model can be confusing when describing how signed language is realised in a TC approach, as it is not clear at what point on the continuum signing becomes 'voice off' BSL. As a consequence of this confusion, many argue that a TC approach is not appropriate for early intervention or schooling for 'auditory' deaf learners (for example, those with CIs) as they conflate language and modality, viewing all signed language as 'voice off'.

Model 2 – Separation of language and modality

A_____V

Spoken **English** Speechreading, Cueing, Signing

V_____V

BSL

In Model 2, a distinction is made between language and modality. The first continuum represents English and the ways in which both auditory and visual channels can be used to convey it. The emphasis is on using a range of modalities to make English accessible – the essence of a TC approach. BSL is not an aspect of the model. The second continuum represents BSL and the range of ways in which the visual modality is used to make meaning in a visual-gestural language.

If both of these languages were used in an educational setting, the approach would be termed bilingual. Little has been written as to whether BSL has a role in a TC approach and whether it is still appropriate to call it TC if BSL is included as part of the model. Most of the discussion has centred on the nature of the signed forms of English that would be used in a TC approach – from a strict one-to-one match with English (for example, SEE) to more conceptually accurate versions (for example, CASE).

In separating language from modality it becomes easier to see how sign can be used to support English language development in concert with auditory input in a TC approach. This is a goal that is most timely in the current climate. It also helps to allay concerns that the use of signed communication precludes the use of voice (for example, for children with CIs, in the early years before a communication choice is clear). It is this misunderstanding that fuels the notion that speech and sign cannot co-exist effectively in an educational model. They can – and this model is called Total Communication.

It remains to be seen whether we continue to use the term TC in describing an approach that is multi-modal and comprehensive, but it seems clear that this communication approach will continue to play an important role – and perhaps an increasingly important one – in the field of deaf education in the 21st Century.

Connie Mayer EdD, OCT is an associate professor at York University in Canada.

The sign bilingual movement

Looking back over the last 20 years, Susan Gregory and Ruth Swanwick discuss changes in deaf education and the emergence of the sign bilingual approach

The sign bilingual approach to the education of deaf children was introduced in the early 1990s in two schools for the deaf – the Royal School for the Deaf Derby, and Longwill School, Birmingham – and a local authority, Leeds, under the auspices of its deaf and hearing-impaired service. Other places were soon to follow suit. Although this might have been seen as a beginning, it was a result of many years of change within deaf education.

What factors contributed to the development of the sign bilingual approach?
In the early part of the 20th Century, oral approaches to the education of deaf children held sway. These had an emphasis on spoken language and a rejection of signing. However, toward the end of the 1960s there was an atmosphere of change. The Lewis report in 1968 was convened to look at the education of deaf children and the possible place of fingerspelling and signing, and the RNID held a conference in 1975 that looked at methods of communication currently used in the education of deaf children. While neither of these endorsed sign language, they were an indication of growing dissatisfaction with the then current practices in the education of deaf children.

Dissatisfaction with oral approaches
Oralism was the dominant approach in the education of deaf children, but concern over achievements was growing. In the UK, the most important study was carried out by Reuben Conrad, who looked at a cohort of deaf school leavers in the 1970s and found disappointing results in reading, speech intelligibility and lip-reading (*Deaf School Child*, 1979). Such poor achievements were also demonstrated in studies from other countries.

The recognition of sign language
Before the late 1960s and early 1970s, sign languages were not seen as full languages but as crude systems of mime and gesture, despite the fact that these languages had been used by deaf people for many years. Recognition of the status of sign as a full language came first in the USA in the 1960s, through the work of William Stokoe, and Mary Brennan coined the term British Sign Language (BSL) in 1976 for the sign language used by the deaf community in the UK. This recognition meant that for the first time, the use of sign language in education became a possibility as it was demonstrated that it had the attributes of other languages, including the use of syntax to create meaning and the ability to generate an infinite number of new signs.

The growth of sign language
Throughout the 1980s and 90s sign language gradually became more visible, on television, at party political conferences and in theatres. Research was developing at the universities of Durham and Bristol.

As more hearing people learnt to sign, more became available to work in sign bilingual settings

In addition, through the advent of the CACDP (Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People), founded in 1980, a process for the assessment of sign language skills was established. This in turn led to many sign language courses being provided, initially in deaf centres, but then as part of local authority adult education provision. As more hearing people learnt to sign, more became available to work in sign bilingual settings.

Sign language in education
In 1983 the organisation Language of Sign as an Educational Resource (LASER) was set up to explore the possibilities of using sign language within education. It was responding to the developing status of sign language and, in addition, was informed by changing ideas of bilingualism in general. In many countries, in the 1960s and 70s, school children who spoke more than one language were seen as disadvantaged. However, this finding was overturned by the work of a number of researchers, including Jim Cummins in Canada, who showed that for children using French and English, bilingualism could be an advantage. Language development was not inhibited and greater cognitive flexibility was achieved in some tasks. This changed the dominant view that being bilingual was a disadvantage.

There were also findings about the attainments of deaf children of deaf parents. Research into the

attainments of deaf pupils, carried out in the 1970s and 80s, indicated that deaf children of deaf parents were more successful educationally than those with hearing parents. These results emerged in studies of reading, writing and academic achievement and, in some instances, spoken language. Attributing this to the early use of sign language in these families led to the conclusion that sign language could be beneficial in the education of deaf children. While the issue was more complex than this, it could be said that the use of sign language with deaf children did not *inhibit* intellectual and linguistic development.

These developments led to a sign bilingual approach being introduced in some schools and authorities, first experimentally and then more formally.

Sign bilingual education in practice
Sign bilingual education developed rapidly in the early stages. As this happened, many issues were raised and some people became concerned that there was no agreed definition of sign bilingualism or agreed practice. In 1998 LASER published the booklet *Sign Bilingualism: A Model* which defined sign bilingualism and set out aspects of philosophy, policy and practice.

Teachers felt empowered by having a language they could use to deliver the curriculum

It defined sign bilingualism as an approach to the education of deaf children in which the language of the deaf community (British Sign Language) and the language of the hearing community (English) are used. In the case of children from ethnic minority groups it is more appropriate to use the term 'sign multilingualism' in order to recognise the position of sign languages other than English.

In the early days the sign bilingual approach grew in popularity and spread to a number schools and resource bases. Teachers felt empowered by having a language they could use to deliver the curriculum. Informal reports suggested that there was development in deaf children's self-esteem. A research study by Susan Gregory and Sandra Smith in 1997 suggested that children in sign bilingual settings had positive notions of themselves and their deafness. Recognition of BSL grew and it was officially recognised by the UK Government in March 2003. New tools for the assessment of children's expressive and receptive BSL were developed.

There was greater recognition of the role of BSL in schools as evidenced by the number of hearing teachers who joined BSL classes and the increasing number of well-qualified deaf professionals working in education. One course providing the mandatory Teacher of the Deaf qualification had a specific focus on sign bilingual issues. However, in developing practice a number of issues emerged.

There was a need for special courses for the training of staff, particularly for deaf people

The status of English and BSL
While within the sign bilingual approach both languages are considered as having equal status, in reality BSL often became the dominant and preferred language for most children. This happened because English seemed much more difficult for them to acquire and their urgent need was for language as a basis for their education.

Sign language vocabulary
As more and more subjects began to be taught through BSL, the need emerged for specialist signs to meet curriculum needs, and groups evolved to consider and develop these signs.

Literacy
Literacy remained an issue and the best way to teach a child to read whose first language was BSL was continually discussed. A paper by Connie Mayer and Gordon Wells in 1996 asked the crucial question as to the nature of the linguistic skills that are transferred when BSL, a signed language, is used in teaching literacy based on a written, spoken language.

Training of staff
There was a need for special courses for the training of staff, particularly for deaf people who were becoming increasingly involved in the education process.

Sign language and parents
As children's sign language skills developed, it was important to provide parents who did not already sign with signing skills so that they could communicate with their children at an appropriate level. However, not all parents were able to attend classes, and there were no established curricula specifically designed for use with parents, so these had to be developed.

The role of Sign Supported English
There was debate over the role of Sign Supported English in sign bilingual programmes. Some teachers rejected it as not having a place in deaf education, while others saw a role for it.

Sign bilingual education now
Over the 20 years in which the sign bilingual approach developed, the context both within education and for deaf people was changing.

Within education, an emphasis on inclusive practice grew and increasing numbers of schools for deaf children were closed.

There were significant changes for deaf children themselves – technological advances including the internet and email, social networks, mobile phones and subtitling on television. There were also technologies directly affecting access to sound, such as digital hearing aids and FM systems. However, the major development influencing educational practice was cochlear implants. These enabled many profoundly and severely deaf children to develop useful hearing and spoken language. They were introduced in the UK at about the same time as bilingual education was developing in the early 1990s.

These two developments of cochlear implantation and sign bilingual approaches characterised two major paradigms in deaf education: cochlear implants arising from a medical model which saw deafness as a disability and something to be cured, while the sign bilingual approach was rooted in a social-cultural model, where sign language is a distinguishing feature of a minority culture, the deaf community, which shares a language, history and culture. In a way these two developments represented two opposing streams in deaf education, concerned with whether sign or spoken language should be the language of education for deaf children.

An emphasis on meeting the child's communication needs, whatever they are, is emerging

However, rather than this debate continuing, what seems to have changed is the focus of discussion in talking about the education of deaf children. Rather than the focus on which language and which mode of language (sign or speech) should be used, an emphasis on meeting the child's communication needs, whatever they are, is emerging. The policy documents of a number of schools and services stress their ability to meet a child's communication needs, including using BSL. Some service providers are beginning to use terms again such as 'Total Communication' or 'All Inclusive Communication' to encompass the repertoire of language support that they provide and to include both English and BSL. There is less emphasis on policy 'being bilingual' and more evidence of practitioners fitting education to the individual child's needs. This reflects a more open approach and greater understanding of the issues, as terms such as sign language, deaf culture and bilingualism have all become part of the educational discourse.

While cochlear implants mean that there are many more deaf children who communicate using speech, it has also become clear that there will always be some children who need a sign bilingual approach to fulfil their potential. Also, for a number of young people with implants there are some contexts where the ability to sign is an advantage, particularly at the secondary stage of education. Deaf young people who have implants and also sign tend to be more flexible in their approach to communication and talk about the needs of the situation rather than particular language practices.

The sign bilingual approach has been a major factor in the development of a continuum of provision

There is still an active group of professionals who promote a sign bilingual philosophy and work together to develop and share practices for deaf pupils who learn primarily through BSL – www.signbilingual.co.uk/ A policy document has been developed involving collaboration between practitioners and other interested parties (*Sign Bilingual Education: Policy and Practice* by Ruth Swanwick and Susan Gregory, 2007). This development work and the related research partnerships centre on how to establish strong English and BSL skills and anticipate and respond to the changing communication profiles of deaf learners.

Technology and education have changed over the past 20 years, with significant impact on the education of deaf children. The sign bilingual approach has been a major factor in the development of a continuum of provision, in terms of the development of practice and of an educational philosophy open to new evidence and developments. A major benefit of this has been that deaf education has been articulated and discussed openly in the UK and looks beyond a polarised debate, taking an overall perspective of the changing environment and the need to evolve educational practices.

The sign bilingual approach is still in a state of evolution where practitioners consider the impact of recent changes and continue to adapt to the shifting focus on an individualised approach. The aim remains to maximise the educational opportunities for deaf children and young people. The sign bilingual movement ensures that sign language remains a valuable and relevant element in many deaf children's education.

Ruth Swanwick is a senior lecturer in deaf education at the University of Leeds. Susan Gregory was previously a reader in deaf education at the University of Birmingham.

From fax to fiction

Kirsty Crombie Smith looks back over the last 25 years and asks, where next for the future of communication and Deafax?

'Twenty-five years! I can't believe you have been there that long!' Well, I haven't, but Deafax celebrated its 25th birthday in 2010 with a whole host of events, from sponsored walks and triathlons to gala dinners and sky dives – we certainly highlighted all our achievements over the years. So, how have communication, particularly telecommunications, and Deafax changed over the last quarter of a century?

Deafax was set up in 1985 by Ken Carter, a teacher with a deaf daughter who saw the potential of newly emerging computers and telecommunications in helping to break down the barriers of isolation for deaf people. It started as a voluntary organisation, with the early projects based around inspiring deaf students to believe in themselves, and the first Deaf Students Can conferences were funded by the European Union. An early conference on deafness and technology brought together academics, teachers, researchers and deaf students to explore what technologies were out there and what we could be using them for. This led to a project with telephones for deaf children, using minicoms and fax machines to link groups of young deaf people together in a 'buddying' scheme, helping to improve writing and literacy skills as well as breaking down barriers of isolation by creating a network of deaf students around the world.

These projects continued throughout the nineties, expanding the vision for young deaf people and inspiring them to take new directions and to challenge existing stereotypes. Towards the end of the decade the DeafChild International programme was started and by the early noughties we saw Deafax delivering training across the globe to countries like India, Barbados, Australia

and the Irish and Czech Republics. At the same time, the next generation of telecommunication was taking over – the internet.

Although the internet began in the sixties, it wasn't until the mid- to late nineties that we really saw it taking hold. It is now estimated that 30% of the world's population regularly use it. But how did Deafax start using this newly emerging technology to support deaf children? The first stage was to develop deaf-friendly accessible training material that schools could use with their deaf students, so a series of information and communication technology (ICT) projects began. This time Deafax broadened its remit, working with Teachers of the Deaf to ensure that they were fully equipped to use these new personal computers.

Projects included linking students across the globe by email, and the DeafChild International project created a penpal scheme linking deaf children from different countries together. We also started a mentor scheme where high achieving deaf adults would share their stories and experiences so that younger deaf children could be inspired and learn from their experiences.

One of the outcomes of these projects was that the Government recognised that different groups of children needed differents types of specialist support. At this point Deafax, partnering with BATOD, lobbied the Government to ensure that the bespoke needs of deaf children were not sidelined. The end result? The Deaf

Children's Communication Aids Project (DCCAP) was created by Deafax and BATOD and funded by the Government to run for five years, ensuring that the individual needs of deaf children were met. This project worked closely with schools and units testing and trialling new hardware and software and ensuring that deaf children were given expert and dedicated technical support.

The mid-noughties is where I come in. I joined Deafax in 2006 when it was starting to expand its resources, creating new software and training packages on a deaf-friendly visual theme. The memory capacity and processing power of the computer had so improved by then that using video footage of signing was possible. So the new Deafax deaf-friendly process was formalised, all material being visual with support from signed BSL and spoken English.

Although the development of the internet had slowed down, it hadn't stopped. Soon webcams and online video conferencing were not just expensive things for high powered offices but a communication tool for you and me, with Deafax being right there again, starting

a new project linking schools with webcams so that students themselves could work on projects together. In fact, at every step of the way Deafax has strived to be there testing and trialling how these new technologies can be used to empower deaf people.

At the same time, things were getting smaller – mobile phones were becoming mini-computers – with the internet being shrunk down to fit on to smaller screens. And communication? Well, now you don't just phone someone, you can text them, send them emails or video messages on the go and even have live mobile video chats. How has this impacted on the deaf community? With communication becoming more fluid and easier, deaf people, particularly children and young people, are being given more freedom as parents feel more confident that they can

contact them when they are out. A new level of independence and liberty is ensuring that the next generation of young deaf people is more autonomous; but with new choices come new risks and we need to continue to ensure that our deaf young people are aware of the dangers. This is where

Deafax has again stepped in, creating new training workshops around safety online and protecting yourself from harm.

The next stage? This is where the fiction begins.... It is nearly a year since I saw Cisco's holographic video feed into a conference. A full-sized 3D man was beamed onto the stage from California and explained how the process worked to an audience of hundreds in Bangalore, India. While it might be something that is only available to the rich and successful businesses

at the moment, in another 20–30 years, instead of giving someone a call, we could just as easily be beaming into their sitting room!

And the next stage for Deafax? Holographic staff? No, we'll stick with our highly skilled staff continuing to research and source the latest things. But as hardware gets smaller and software has to be faster, more interactive and visual, we need to strive to move forward to ensure that we are adapting continually to meet the needs of our community, to take risks and forge new partnerships – to dare, to win and to transform lives through technology!

Kirsty Crombie Smith is Operations Director at Deafax. Deafax Head Office has recently relocated to The Saunderton Estate, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire HP14 4BF. Tel: 01494 568885.

On the curriculum

Catherine Drew reveals how and why the National Deaf Studies Curriculum came into existence and the role of communication within it

The National Deaf Studies Curriculum was published in 2009, and is now used in more than 35 schools, colleges, resource bases and units. Before expanding on the content of the curriculum itself, it is important to consider the landscape before its publication and why it has become so important to those who use it.

Prior to 2009, a high proportion of academic institutions that educated deaf children taught a form of Deaf Studies. This subject was typically led by a Deaf Instructor. Unlike other members of teaching staff, Deaf Instructors had to devise lessons without a curriculum, without resources and invariably without a support network. As a result, the quality of provision of Deaf Studies lessons would greatly vary from school to school, which created a real lack of consistency across the UK unlike any other subject. Clearly, this was not the fault of individual tutors, but more a lack of provision across the board.

The importance of a deaf child receiving Deaf Studies lessons is, in my opinion, unquestionable. A deaf child is different from a hearing child, and children, generally speaking, are inquisitive. It is important to provide answers to all the typical questions for a deaf child. Why am I deaf? Does being deaf limit my opportunities? And questions at a much younger age – Are mummy and daddy deaf? Why am I different from mummy and daddy? To provide a deaf child with an environment in which these questions can be asked and discussed is of the upmost importance. I teach Deaf Studies at Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children and have countless examples of how the subject benefits our children. The essence of what is being said is nicely summed up by one particular example. I was talking to a six year-old child about her family and I gave her a worksheet asking her who in her immediate family was hearing and who was deaf. It is important to note that both mum and dad sign at home. This child wrote that she was deaf, mummy was hearing, daddy was hearing and baby (mum was pregnant at the time) was ? This is a great example of how the child was very comfortable with knowing mum and dad were hearing and that she was deaf and she was comfortable with the idea that the upcoming baby could be either. Given all of that, she was very comfortable in her own skin and naturally spoke to me about the differences in being hearing and in being deaf.

This example shows the benefit of having dedicated time with deaf children to explore their identity. As all professionals who work with deaf children are aware, the chances of deaf children/people encountering problems with mental health are substantially higher than those of hearing people. So, giving children the opportunity to talk about their identity and accept their deafness at an early stage can hardly be counter-productive. For all of these reasons, the need for a Deaf Studies Curriculum was quite obviously apparent.

In 2001, the National Deaf Studies Working Group was established when Deaf Instructors from Frank Barnes, Oak Lodge, Blanche Nevile, Hamilton Lodge, Royal School for the Deaf, Elmfield and Thomas Tallis School came together and discussed the need for a national network to share ideas, develop resources and discuss issues surrounding Deaf Studies. The working group concluded that Deaf Studies should have an established curriculum, like other curriculum-based subjects that are used and taught in the world of education.

The curriculum that was devised provides an overview of the teaching programme, samples of activities, samples of assessment formats with instructions, level descriptors and attainment targets used to measure the progress of children throughout the curriculum. The curriculum has five core units: Deaf identity; Communication technology; Communication; Deaf history; Deaf community and culture.

These units were devised with the knowledge that deaf children are now scattered in different educational placements and as a result this curriculum seeks to ensure that they have a strong sense of identity, know where they belong in society and understand the various communication modes used in both the deaf and the hearing worlds.

Communication is a key part of the curriculum. The suggested topics within communication are:

- Communication strategies
- Communication modes
- Role of the communication support worker
- Using interpreters, notetakers and lip-speakers
- Regional sign variation
- International signs
- Differences between language and communication.

Within the topic of teaching communication modes we teach our pupils the various communication methods used throughout the UK. Pupils learn that first and foremost, there are two languages: English and British Sign Language (BSL). We learn that both languages have their own set of rules, sentence structures, word/sign use, range of vocabulary and grammar. While

we may have our language preferences, pupils are encouraged to understand and recognise the importance of both languages and that they are of equal value to both the hearing and deaf communities.

Although English and BSL are established languages, there are communication modes across the language spectrum that could also be called support tools for either language. These 'support tools' are not languages but merely aids in accessing either or both languages. When applying the above diagram to a literacy lesson, a teacher may choose to use Sign Supported English to support deaf BSL pupils to construct English sentences. In speech and language therapy sessions, a speech and language therapist may choose to use Visual Phonics in order to support pronunciations with or without sounds but with clear lip-patterns.

The five curriculum areas are designed to be taught within Deaf Studies, but there is clear encouragement for cross-curricular activities. The concept is that Deaf Studies can be adopted across the curriculum, allowing for other subjects and other professionals to ensure that they are delivering information regarding language and communication factually.

The success of the curriculum is undeniable. Several academic institutions have adopted it across the UK, and indeed schools from other countries have bought the curriculum as a base on which to try and develop their own cultural versions. For more details regarding the curriculum and the working groups that feed into it visit www.nationaldeafstudiescurriculum.com or email deafstudies@fbarnes.camden.sch.uk.

Catherine Drew is the Leader of Bilingual Practice/Chair of the National Deaf Studies Working Group.

Communication soup

Having attended The Ear Foundation's international summer camp for deaf teenagers with his son, Ketil Eidsaunet shares the recipe for a great broth

To cook a good soup you need good ingredients. It is best to aim for a broth that needs to boil for a long time while other ingredients are added. You add only high quality and good tasting ingredients.

The communication soup starts with a broth of languages and communication skills. Deaf children are really eager communicators and use the means available – because they have to. They need to be good to master the obstacles they experience in their pursuit of good communication. They develop good communication skills with whatever tools available – the perfect broth.

A pot is also essential to reach the goal of cooking and serving a good tasting soup. When deaf teenagers from different countries travel to meet for some days of fun and common experiences; when they meet their peers alone at a quiet deaf school during the summer holiday; when they feel free and safe, at a place away from it all – then you have the perfect pot.

Communication is based on different languages; different modalities; different skill sets; different challenges from hearing and sight loss; spoken English, Dutch, Flemish, Turkish, Finnish, Norwegian; sign language; texting; natural visualisation; and very different levels of skills in any common language. These many different language flavours make the perfect ingredients.

The Ear Foundation started with the pot – an International Teens Week in July 2011, where deaf teenagers from all over Europe were invited to meet at St John's School for the Deaf. By meeting there – with no idea of what was cooking – they formed the broth of the soup. Bringing all their completely different communication skills and experiences, they were providing the natural ingredients of the soup.

It all started with some shy glances, but the shyness was gone as soon as they had met their room-mates. Excitement was in the air or, should we say, in the broth. The first day the national groups stuck together a little in the bus – very different from the last day where they all jumped around in the bus to talk to everyone. The soup had really boiled long enough, and the different flavours of the ingredients had blended nicely into a perfect soup – a soup with a great overall flavour where all the ingredients could be found at the same time.

The experience of watching the ingredients boil up into a great tasting communication soup was unique. Being invited to taste the soup was touching – a lifetime experience. Highly recommended! Five stars out of four. Awesome!

Language learning ideas

Maria Cameron shares some of her strategies for helping deaf children with additional language needs

Deafness is a low incidence special need and within this group, the number of children who have additional needs in terms of how they learn language is even lower. Consequently these children are often scattered geographically, making it difficult for professionals to build up in-depth experience of working with this group of children. I have been fortunate to work extensively with deaf children with additional language needs through my time at St John's School for the Deaf in Boston Spa, my continuing work with Sound Advice at The Ear Foundation and now in my speech and language therapy practice Steps2Speech.

The advent of cochlear implants has highlighted profoundly deaf children who struggle with spoken language because poor speech production no longer masks these language difficulties. Some children with severe or moderate hearing losses don't make expected progress. There are several parameters that need to be accounted for before concluding that there is a specific language impairment in addition to deafness, for example age of diagnosis, consistent use of appropriate amplification, exposure to a good spoken language environment, a good acoustic environment, and average non-verbal cognitive skills. If these can be discounted as a cause for the language delay, it is probable that even without deafness, the child would have more difficulty learning spoken language than other children. So what are some of the areas likely to cause difficulty?

Vocabulary

Receptive: the children have much more difficulty linking spoken words to meaning. They can have a very narrow understanding of a word and can be inflexible, for example 'shoe' is what they wear on their feet but is not what a horse has. They understand more nouns than other types of words such as verbs, prepositions, adjectives or emotional vocabulary.

Expressive: finding the right word to use can be difficult. They may recall a word that starts with the same sound or first syllable (target word: telephone; retrieved word: telescope) or is in the same 'family' (target word: coat; retrieved word: jumper). Sometimes they can find the picture when you say the word but can't recall the word.

We store words in a logical way. To describe the 'vehicle on tracks' we go to the store in our brain for 'vehicles/public transport/on tracks/train'. We know it rhymes with rain, starts with 'tr' and has one syllable. We can write and read the word, draw the picture, know what it is made of, what it sounds like and what it smells like. All aspects are integrated to give the wide meaning. When a child has word-finding difficulties, the store for 'vehicle' words may also have animals and clothes in it. The store for rhyming words may be jumbled so that finding the correct word quickly is quite a task.

Exploring different aspects of the word (see below) can help to 'consolidate' the word. Observing which words the child chooses instead of the target word gives an idea of the process happening. It's then important to find which clues are helpful for this particular child, for example the first sound/syllable number/it's a type of transport.

Understanding and using structure

This can be affected at different levels. Some children show very early signs of struggling to understand and use structure. Even at a two-word level, they put them the wrong way round. They typically pick out key words for much longer than expected. Word order is often not taken into account – 'Jonny's going to Freddy's house/Freddy's going to Jonny's house'. This is often reflected in their expressive language where they can't order their words. They have a poor understanding of what different words are for, for example nouns, verbs, where/when phrases, adjectives, prepositions and pronouns. They can't categorise into these groups and so have no internal concept that a 'who/what word' is usually followed by a 'verb'. A fuller description of shape coding by Mary McAleer at St John's was published in the March 2011 Magazine ('Shaping a sentence'). Children finding language structure difficult need very specific

teaching as to how all aspects of grammar work. Shape coding can be used to develop curriculum content by using this vocabulary and these ideas to produce shape-coded sentences.

Some children develop early grammatical skills at sentence level but get stuck when they want to give more information, and what they can say at single sentence level breaks down. They can't order their thoughts to give an overall structure to what they say. They need time to plan what to say first, what comes next and what is at the end. Flow charts, like the one below, are a good way for them to indicate all their ideas and then, together with the ToD or teaching assistant, plan the order. The use of a visual support is a scaffold that eventually can be replaced with prompts such as 'Remember to say what happened first, what's next….' With older children this can be used for planning a hypothesis, describing scientific experiments and giving reasons for a historical event.

Auditory memory

Deafness itself compromises a child's auditory memory. Children with additional language difficulties often experience more difficulty. If you can't remember past the third word someone says it will severely limit how much language you can understand. It is worth looking at the Number Repetition Forwards and Backwards in CELF (Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals) 4 to explore auditory memory levels more objectively. Practically, there needs to be a two-pronged attack:

- Develop auditory memory skills by: playing games such as I packed my bag…; getting the child to repeat instructions; chunking what you say with pauses to give time for it to be assimilated; speaking more slowly but still with natural intonation.
- Support auditory memory with visual memory by using written key words, word webs, flow diagrams, pictures and written phrases.

At a higher level, it helps to give the child a number of pieces of information to listen out for in a short paragraph, for example, 'I want you to listen for where the boy is, what he is wearing and how he feels'. This gives support for the listening task and the child knows he or she does not have to remember everything. There is a useful document, *Teaching strategies used to develop short-term memory in deaf children* by Isabel Gibson, on the BATOD website.

Giving appropriate levels of information

Some children can use good language structures but they are difficult to understand because they assume you know more than you do. They use words such as there, they, get and it which give no detail. Opposite to this are children who give too much detail and find it difficult to pick out the important information. Both these make communication difficult. I find using a range of picture materials as a barrier game effective (one person has the picture and the other cannot see it). The child describes the picture and the adult sketches what is said. Curriculum material – a Victorian street or the rainforest – can be used with good effect. Talk about the materials together to decide what is the important information that best describes the scene. As with all aspects of language, practice and rehearsal are important. Let the child see that if he/she says, 'It gone there!' you cannot draw anything because you do not know what 'it' 'gone' 'there' refer to, whereas, 'The cat has climbed up the tree/the lava has covered the houses', gives good information. Building up the concept of 'important information' can then be used as a trigger in conversation to refocus the child when communication breaks down.

Ability to infer meaning

Drawing meaning from situations is something we do without thinking. Someone comes in with a wet coat and we know it is raining outside. Some children do not make these links even from visual scenarios. Making links with implied linguistic meanings can be a real problem, for example 'The dog barked and someone shouted "ow!"' The implication is that the dog bit the person but that was not said directly. Children who have specific language difficulties on top of their deafness need much more time to go through the process of working out these meanings. If they work it out rather than being told what it means, this helps them remember and learn from it. Looking and thinking pictures are good for deriving meaning from visual scenarios, and Winslow Press has a range of suitable materials available.

Identifying children who have language learning needs over and above their deafness is vital if they are to make progress with their spoken language skills. I have shared a few strategies that have worked for me. The child's deafness should never be seen as a secondary need to the specific language impairment as it will always impact on their access to and acquisition of language.

Maria Cameron is an independent speech and language therapist.

Ensuring Total Communication

Eleanor Hutchinson sheds some light on the Total Communication approach used at Windsor Park School in Falkirk

Opened in 1972, Windsor Park is a purpose-built school for the deaf in Falkirk, central Scotland. The primary department is situated on the campus of a mainstream primary school and the secondary department is within Falkirk High School, allowing for integration according to individual pupils' needs and abilities. We also have nursery provision in the adjoining mainstream school, and the outreach sensory support service is co-ordinated from the primary school. We use a Total Communication approach, which for us means using a wide variety of skills and resources to ensure that each child is given full access to the curriculum – learning to communicate and communicating to learn.

The school first began using British Sign Language (BSL) in 1999, and a combination of Sign Supported English (SSE) and BSL is used for most group teaching sessions. Staff adapt their communication depending on the children they are working with, because it is important to us that all children should have the opportunity to communicate in the way that is most effective for them; for some children we might use spoken English, for others BSL or SSE. All staff hold CACDP (now Signature) BSL qualifications at Level 2 or above. Pupils have weekly BSL sessions with a qualified, profoundly deaf sign language tutor to develop their BSL skills.

At present all our pupils come from families whose first language is English, but in the past we have provided resources and services to support families who were native BSL users or those with English as an additional language. This has included the provision of interpreters, council library resources and NDCS materials.

In most assemblies and whole-school activities, Windsor Park staff sign for the children to make sure that they can access the information. However, the school provides a qualified BSL interpreter for end-of-term assemblies, prize-giving and out-of-school events where possible. By allowing the pupils to become accustomed to using an interpreter who is not a familiar adult, we are ensuring that they develop skills that will be important to their communication and understanding in adult life. The pupils are also exposed to spoken English on a daily basis, allowing them to become familiar with all three communication modes (spoken English, BSL and SSE), which will give them more

freedom to choose their preferred communication mode when they are older. When pupils have progressed to the high school they are given the opportunity to attain CACDP BSL qualifications and a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) lip-reading certificate at Intermediate 1 level. By completing these qualifications, the pupils develop greater confidence in their own communication, as well as enhanced self-esteem.

It is also very important to us that our pupils are able to communicate outside the classroom environment, so we run deaf awareness and signing sessions for Primary 7 pupils in all of the Falkirk High cluster schools in addition to our associated mainstream school. This ensures that when mainstream pupils across the authority progress to Falkirk High School they already have some deaf awareness and communication skills to allow them to interact with deaf pupils who might be in their class. Parents, families and friends of deaf pupils are offered free signing classes in Windsor Park or at a suitable location closer to their home if transport is an issue.

We also make available sign language books, DVDs and other materials for schools to borrow. Signing lunchtime sessions are offered to staff and pupils within the high school. In addition, signing is offered as a 'Golden Time' activity for mainstream primary pupils. The mainstream pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in signing groups and at each end-of-term assembly a song is chosen for all pupils and staff to sign, in order to include the whole school.

As well as promoting deaf awareness among school pupils in the area, we work hard to raise its importance with staff as well. Each year we run courses to promote deaf awareness and to assist teachers across the

authority in successfully integrating deaf children into their classes. One of these courses is run specifically for probationer teachers, ensuring that every new teacher who is placed within Falkirk Council is aware of the needs of deaf children.

For us, Total Communication is not just about the mode of communication used – it is also about ensuring that children have a positive communication environment in which to learn. At Windsor Park we make maximum use of children's residual hearing. We have close links with audiology to ensure that each child is appropriately aided and has the best possible access to spoken communication. All classrooms in Windsor Park are soundproofed and staff work with mainstream class teachers to ensure that their classrooms have optimum acoustics. We keep up to date with technology, providing all children with discreet radio aids for use at school and at home. All classrooms in the mainstream primary and high school are equipped with Soundfield systems, which can be used in conjunction with the radio aids. In addition, both the primary and high school departments have webcams and video-conferencing facilities to enable signed communication either via the internet or the telephone. We have used these to make contact and forge links with other schools for the deaf in the UK, promoting communication with other deaf young people, as well as allowing the high school and primary pupils to communicate with each other easily while in school.

Within the classroom we use a lot of visual aids in order to support communication, including photos, visual timetables and colour coding. By using these systems we are able to help the pupils understand more effectively the task they are carrying out, and visual cues familiarise them with different aspects of the classroom environment and routine. Working collaboratively with our speech and language therapists, we have introduced colourful phonics and semantics schemes. We also use the same colour coding to develop storytelling skills. These have given the children more confidence in their written communication, as well as making it easier for them to carry out tasks independently.

Some of our pupils have additional support needs that make both spoken and signed communication more difficult for them. In these cases, we have again worked in close collaboration with speech and language therapists to introduce them to alternative and augmentative communication aids such as communication books. These can be used both in school and beyond in order to support the pupils' communication; they help the children to express themselves with ease and confidence, minimising the frustration and concern that can grow from not being understood.

At Windsor Park school we aim to ensure that pupils are confident individuals, successful learners and effective communicators. We adapt to each child's needs and abilities, taking into account the different ways in which children learn to communicate. Using a wide variety of modes of communication, promoting deaf awareness and providing information about positive communication environments ensures that we can fulfil this aim.

Eleanor Hutchinson is a Teacher of the Deaf at Windsor Park School in Falkirk and a member of BATOD's NEC.

According to the pupils

Some quotes from the children:

'I like my radio aid because I can hear the teacher better. I can hear the Smartboard too.' Matthew, aged eight

'Signing is good because it helps me. It's good to communicate with other deaf people in the world.' Nicole, aged 10

'I like [the visual timetable], I can see it change every day.' Kirsty-Anne, aged 11

'We use the webcam for signing; I can ask [other deaf children] lots of questions.' Jordan, aged 11

'It [lip-reading qualification] is useful. I think it makes it easier to talk to people.' Connor, aged 17

Linguistic diversity

Merle Mahon and Ali Davis discuss some of the issues around communication for deaf children who have English as an additional language

In our increasingly diverse school communities, Teachers of the Deaf frequently come across the challenge of communicating with children from hearing families where English is an additional language (EAL). The numbers are substantial: in January 2011, the Department for Education estimated that of the 16.8% primary school pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English, 22.3% have a hearing impairment (see http://tinyurl.com/3tg7frk). In its most recent survey (August 2011) the Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) indicated that 15% of deaf children in both primary and secondary education used another spoken language (other than English) at home (see www.batod.org.uk/index.php?id=/publications/survey) There are very many 'other spoken languages' and although schools can usually provide support in some languages, it is often a challenge to cover them all.

Families of EAL deaf children

EAL deaf children's communication will depend on the language(s) and communication styles they are exposed to in their homes. Families of EAL deaf children can be described as being linguistically diverse – they usually speak their home language or languages fluently, as well as English with varying degrees of proficiency. Older siblings may speak English at school, while grandparents or relatives newly arrived in the UK may only use the home language. Some sign language can be used, either BSL or another sign language. Most of the families we have come across speak languages like Somali, Sylheti, Mirpuri Punjabi and many others – languages which are not well documented and for which there is little or no information about typical language acquisition in hearing children.

A familiar dilemma for these families concerns the choice of language they use with their deaf child. Previously, advice to families erred on the side of caution – 'speak only one language to your deaf child' – based on the (now known to be mistaken) view that an EAL deaf child could be doubly disadvantaged. Advice to parents now is similar to that for hearing EAL children – 'there is no "right" way'; 'talk to your child as much as possible because having lots of input (it does not matter in which language) truly benefits language development'; 'use the language with which you are most comfortable and fluent, spoken or signed'. The reason for this advice is that there is a wealth of research showing that bilingualism is an advantage, and does not in itself lead to communication difficulties. The trajectory of language development for bilingual children may be different from monolingual children, but silent periods and some temporary delays are normal. Bilingually developing children may use the same words for the same things in their home language and in English, or they may have words for some things in the home language and for other things in English – this increases their vocabulary. They may sometimes mix up the grammars, especially if they hear 'code mixed' languages from family members, but they will separate the grammars in time, because they hear good models for English from teachers and peers. Deaf children can be bilingual: many are bilingual in a spoken language and a sign language and although research evidence is sparse, there are case studies of children with cochlear implants showing age-appropriate development in two spoken languages.

What do we know about EAL deaf children?

Since the introduction of the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP), all deaf children benefit from early diagnosis together with the technological advances in hearing aids and cochlear implants. So EAL deaf children are more likely to enter education having made some progress with understanding and speaking their home language. This will enhance the speed of their subsequent language development in English. In our experience, they make quicker progress in learning English if their early exposure to their home language is not interrupted. Nevertheless, when they start school, they are unlikely to have fully acquired their first language. Indeed, we do not know if this will be English or the home language. We do know that they continue the language acquisition process well into primary school. Unless lots of English has been spoken at home, most of them start school with no or little English, and their language level is likely to be lower than English-speaking children with similar hearing loss and needs.

They can develop (and maintain) their home language and learn English as hearing EAL children do. Some EAL deaf children drop their home language and learn only English as they advance through the school years. For some, as they grow up, their best language may turn out not to be the home language; indeed, they may lose motivation to use the home language depending on the support and input from within and

outside the family and to some extent on peer pressure. The family cannot control the child's choice of language use.

Although their early progress can be slower, they learn spoken English in the same way as do their English deaf peers. They can then make the equivalent academic progress. It is interesting to note that many difficulties in understanding and using spoken English, encountered by all deaf children, are very similar to the problems encountered by EAL hearing children. This is especially noticeable as they get older and have to use language in a more sophisticated way, for example abstract language, embedded clauses and so on, as is required for the curriculum and for standard assessment tests (SATs). In our experience, working with small groups of EAL deaf children to reinforce language concepts is extremely valuable. Teachers adopting similar practice with EAL hearing children found that they also benefited greatly.

So how do we facilitate our communication with these children? Here are a few pointers based on our experience and our research.

Draw on all modes of communication
Intuitively, we will use visual cues to aid our communication with EAL deaf children, as indeed, we do with all deaf children. In turn the children will use all their resources to communicate with us. So use lots of gesture, signing, miming, facial expression and lip-reading, writing and pointing to pictures and objects.

Use adult–child interventions
In the early years of school, invest in intensive individual adult–child interaction. Findings from our longitudinal study (some of which were reported in this Magazine in Novmeber 2007) have shown that facilitative one-to-one input, given regularly and frequently, is of invaluable benefit to EAL deaf children.

Have high expectations
An EAL deaf child can learn English in the same way as other deaf children, albeit at a slower pace in the early years. However, if the child's spoken language development seems particularly atypical and is not progressing, this is probably not because of the EAL per se, but is more likely to be due to other language and developmental issues that need further investigation.

Celebrate the child's home language
Remember that it is an immense achievement for a profoundly deaf child to become bilingual.

Work with parents
They are central to their child's language development, particularly in the early years. Promote natural parent–child interaction: it's an essential component of language learning. Encourage them to communicate in their most fluent and comfortable language – usually the home language. Give them confidence to use other communication modes, especially gestures, signs and visual cues. Learning sign language can be very helpful for parents if they are interested. Facilitate parents' engagement with school – employing interpreters and translators for meetings and documents is expensive but, we believe, this is a cost that has to be met.

Good communication with EAL deaf children and their families, together with appropriate support and high expectations, is an effective route to promoting the children's language development. If the language is significantly delayed on school entry, then one-to-one adult–child interaction is a crucial element of the developmental path. The good news is that with NHSP, improving technology, early intervention strategies and expanding knowledge of the possibility of dual language acquisition, there is growing evidence of impressive bilingual language development, even for the most profoundly deaf child.

Merle Mahon is a senior lecturer in the Developmental Science Research Department, Division of Psychology and Language Science at University College London and Ali Davis is Teacher in Charge at Bevendean Hearing Support Facility in Brighton.

Catching it on video

Video analysis has proved to be a useful technique in monitoring language development in very young children, as Sue Archbold and Margaret Tait reveal

'Spoken language development of deaf children may be more possible today than ever before. …we are now presented with the opportunity to learn from earlier mistakes and misunderstandings and to synthesize the best ideas of the past with the technological, programming and social advances of today. …we may finally be able to fulfil the promise of effective support for speech and spoken language with hearing loss.'
('Historical and Theoretical Perspectives' by Marc Marschark and Patricia Elizabeth Spencer in *Advances in the Spoken-Language in Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children*, 2006)

With early identification of deafness and earlier access to audition through hearing aids or cochlear implants, as Marschark and Spencer comment, spoken language development may be more possible for deaf children than ever before. We expect children with normal hearing to say their first real word around the age of 12 months. However, many developments have taken place before this. The precursors include appropriate eye contact, conversational style turn-taking, and auditory awareness of the appropriate time to take a turn in the interaction. Shared attention to objects in the environment is developed as both parent and child follow each other's line of gaze. Shared attention helps infants discover what is said to them, provided that it is contingent on what is occupying the child's attention. This is sometimes called the triangle of reference: the parent, the child and the object of interest are at the three points of the triangle, and two sides of the triangle are formed by the parent's and the child's visual regard of the object of interest. The importance of hearing the parent's voice is clear: it forms the third side of the triangle.

However, it may be that these conversational abilities occur in hearing children earlier than previously thought. Studies have revealed that vocal turn-taking increases between the ages of 12 and 18 weeks, and early exchanges may already be intentional. This progress in developing early communication skills continues through infancy: between two and four years of age children become true conversational partners, providing the basis not only for language learning but for later social and emotional development.

This is a vital development: early communication skills are a major predictor of later language ability and also of later interpersonal communication. However, this process is not only reliant on audition – the integration of visual, auditory and motor stimuli is essential to the process of language learning and it can be easy to over-emphasise the role of hearing in spoken language acquisition and to ignore the influences of speechreading and context in spoken communication. Hearing children integrate vision and hearing, are able to live in parallel worlds with an adult in play and share objects of joint attention through vision and hearing.

What about young deaf children – do the same pre-verbal developments take place? What happens if signs are brought into a child's field of vision alongside their focus of attention? What happens if we use hearing aids or implants to complete the triangle auditorially? If these early communication skills are so vital – can we measure them to ensure that a deaf child is developing appropriate communication skills?

Tait video analysis – monitoring the development of early communication skills – was developed with children with hearing aids and has been used to a large degree in the assessment of children with cochlear implants. It not only charts individual progress, but with large groups of children has been found to predict later performance in speech perception and intelligibility, and has been shown to be reliable across observers, and to correlate with other measures. One criticism that has been made is that it is too lengthy and cannot be incorporated into educational or clinical practice; however, trained users can make an analysis of the appropriate video in 20 minutes, and the information that it gives is very useful and difficult to obtain in other ways.

A video made of parent/carer and child in interaction is taken and a transcript made of the 'conversation', showing the adult and child participation – whether by sign or gesture or orally. The transcript indicates where the adult has left a turn in the conversation and whether the child has taken the turn, and if so how – by sign or gesture or orally. We can then obtain measures of the percentage of turns taken and how. We measure:

- turn-taking – vocally and by gesture

- autonomy or initiative – whether the child is showing initiative in the conversation, introducing the 'topic' independently
- non-look vocal turns (NLVT) – the percentage of turns taken by the child, without looking at the adult, (for example, while looking at a book) and taken vocally.

We can thus track changes in these developing skills over time. Figure 1 shows video analysis of Child A's communication skills before implantation and six and 12 months after.

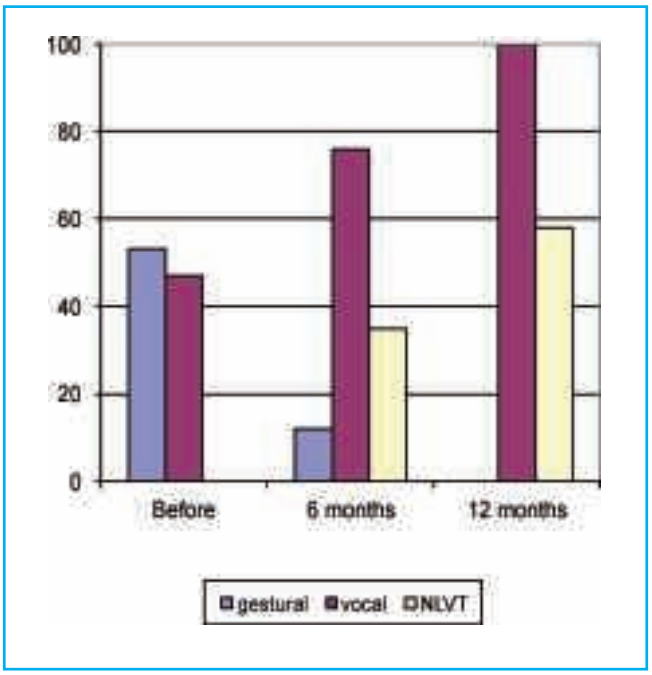


Figure 1: Child A

In the case of this child, she was taking 100% turns prior to implantation, 53% by gesture and 47% by sign/gesture. She was taking no turns without looking, having insufficient hearing. Six months after implantation, she was taking 12% of turns by sign/gesture, 76% vocally and 35% vocally without looking. By 12 months after implantation, she was taking 100% of her turns vocally, and 58% without looking – indicating excellent progress in the use of her implant system. Similarly, one can show different progress – for example, with Child B (figure 2). In this case the child is taking 19% of her turns by gesture prior to implantation, and 20% vocally, a low score. Six months after implantation, she is taking 41% of her turns by sign/gesture and 59% vocally, with no emergence of non-looking vocal turns here or at 12 months after implantation, giving rise to concern for this child who has other difficulties. This video analysis can be used with those children who have other difficulties in this way, and together with other measures it can highlight where progress is, or is not, being made, helping to provide evidence for practice.

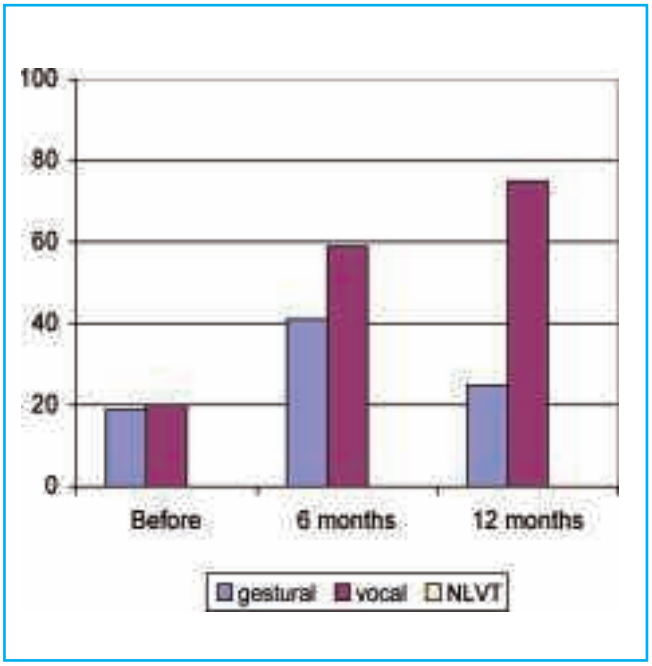


Figure 2: Child B

Tait video analysis has been used to demonstrate that earlier age at implantation is highly predictive of faster development of communication skills and it can also show that children with bilateral implants develop these early communication skills more quickly than those with one implant; for example, with matched groups, as can be seen in figure 3. The groups were implanted below the age of two – 23 unilateral and 27 bilateral. Looking only at non-look vocal turns, neither group was using NLVT prior to implantation; 12 months later, the bilateral group was twice as likely to use NLVT as the unilateral group. This is important – the bilateral group is vocalising and taking turns in conversation in the 'normal' way, while able to focus on the shared object of attention.

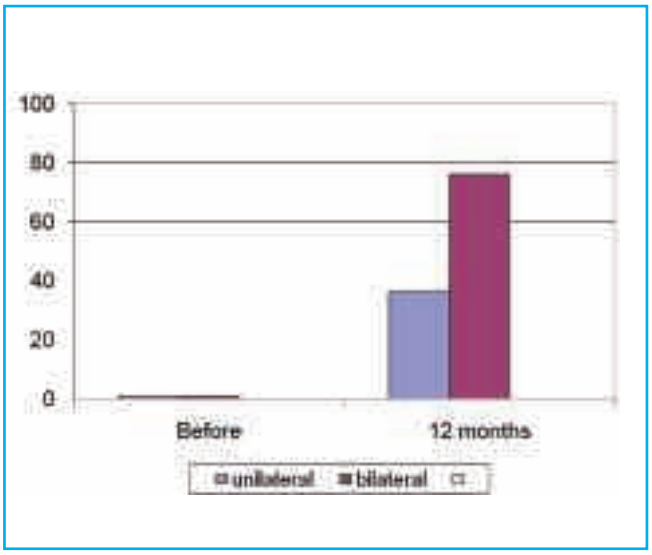


Figure 3

The techniques of this video analysis make it possible to observe minute changes over time in turn-taking and auditory awareness. It can provide objective evidence of the effectiveness of hearing aids or implants in the development of the necessary pre-verbal skills before the emergence of spoken language in a way which is time-effective and readily understood by the non-specialist and parent and so can inform our practice.

With the early diagnosis of deafness and earlier fitting of aids and implants, it is even more vital that we monitor the development of deaf infants' language development to inform our practice and the management of the interventions of hearing aid or cochlear implant. Tait video analysis is one of the few ways in which this can be done – in a robust and time-effective manner, and in a way that is readily understandable by parents and non-professionals. It is part of the Nottingham Early Assessment Package (NEAP), which is available from The Ear Foundation, and which includes a training DVD.

Sue Archbold is Chief Executive of The Ear Foundation and Margaret Tait was Teacher of the Deaf in charge of the nursery at The Ewing School, Nottingham, where she developed her interest in video analysis. She began the education programme at Nottingham Cochlear Implant Programme with Sue Archbold in 1989, and recently concentrated on research at The Ear Foundation, before retiring in 2009.

Further reading

Deaf education: changed by cochlear implantation? by Sue Archbold, University of Njimegen (2010) (www.earfoundation.org.uk)

'Development of spoken language by deaf children' by Peter Blamey in *Deaf Studies, Language and Education*, edited by Marc Marschark and Patricia Elizabeth Spencer (2003)

'The use and reliability of Tait video analysis in assessing preverbal language skills in profoundly deaf and normally hearing children under 12 months of age' by Margaret Tait et al in the *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology* 21 (February 2007)

'Bilateral versus unilateral cochlear implantation in young children' by Margaret Tait el al in the *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology*, 74, 206-211 (2010)

What? What?

A thought-provoking view of communication issues for deaf teenagers

The fun and games involved in communicating with deaf students who have limited spoken English are well known. I would like to raise the issue once again, with a plea! How can we really and truly improve communication in deaf teenagers who have poor spoken English, even worse written English, inadequate reading skills and limited parental support? I have read the documentation that states that supportive parents, good amplification, intensive professional expertise and meaningful education can close the attainment gap between hearing and deaf children. I have even seen it in practice – unfortunately, on too few occasions.

The more common scenario is a 'What? What?' sentence. For example, a sentence such as 'How many eggs are in the basket?' or even 'Please take off your coat' elicits a 'What? What?' as the immediate response.

I am sure that on many occasions the information needs to be repeated because the mind is elsewhere or the student is listening to a number of other much more interesting but decidedly intermittent conversations. Making sure that the student is actively listening in conducive surroundings makes a huge difference – but fundamentally the communication skills between deaf students and their hearing peers and adults are not being transformed as they should be.

It is easy to become discouraged with the pace at which deaf students in secondary school are making progress. For many students, progress in communication is limited to one area at a time – sometimes with peers, sometimes in English/sign, sometimes in science, but very seldom does communication as a cornerstone of society appear to be making big advances.

A significant problem is poor parental communication. With a teenager, parents sometimes appear to be quite set in negative communicative patterns, and attempts to change these are met with limited success on both sides.

So the issues remain:

- How does one enable deaf teenagers to enter society as adults who are able to communicate effectively and have the self-esteem and confidence necessary to be 'givers', not 'takers'?
- What strategies do Teachers of the Deaf use with poorly communicating deaf teenagers?
- How important is it to continue battling with reading skills at 17 years old?
- What are the most important areas of communication for deaf teenagers?
- Is improving parental communication skills so important for a 16 year old?

Working in isolation in a mainstream secondary school can be difficult. I am sure others have battled with the same issues. How have you coped?

Befuddled (a pseudonym)!

Keep in touch!

Visit BATOD's Facebook page and click on 'Like'.
Search for British Association of Teachers of the Deaf

Sign language online

John Glauert shares details of a project to make online communication more accessible to deaf sign language users

Our research group at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in Norwich has been exploring the use of signing avatars to support communication in sign language for about a decade. These avatars are three-dimensional (3D) animated characters that have been designed to be able to perform detailed hand and body movements and a range of realistic facial gestures needed for authentic signing.

Skilled 3D animators can create very natural signing using virtual characters. However, the process is very time consuming and not realistic for rapid communication. Motion capture can also be used but requires expensive specialist equipment. In contrast, the approach we have taken is to use a well-established system for describing sign language gesture, the Hamburg Notation System, and to generate synthetic movements driven by the notation. The results are a little robotic, but have the benefit that once a sign has been described it can be adapted easily for use in many different contexts.

There has often been suspicion in the deaf community that avatar signing is being proposed as an alternative to using expert interpreters, but there is no prospect that such a solution would be of acceptable quality for many years. However, given that interpreters are in very high demand, and therefore too costly for supporting brief unscheduled meetings between hearing and deaf people, there is perhaps a role for a limited, lower quality but quickly available service, in the way that speech recognition and text-to-speech systems have some applications for the hearing community.

TESSA, VANESSA and SiSi

Early work supported by the Post Office developed TESSA (TExt and Sign Support Assistant), which combined speech recognition and signing by a virtual human avatar. Typical phrases used in a Post Office are spoken by the assistant and converted, phrase by phrase, into natural BSL. A later system, VANESSA, supported local government services and text is also displayed for those who don't use sign language. SiSi (Say it Sign it) is a more recent system developed with IBM that handles more general phrases but delivers signing more in the style of Sign Supported English than BSL.

Educational applications

Signing avatars do not need to depict adults! For *Performing Hands*, BSL literacy resources developed by Gamelab London, children enjoyed the signing girl, robot and genie that were developed. Edgy teenage characters were used for *Get Out* for the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust. The *LinguaSign* stories are designed to help hearing children learn foreign languages, but use signing gestures, mostly from NGT (Dutch Sign Language), to reinforce learning. The characters are an alien boy and a tomboy girl.

Web 2.0

In the hearing world there has been an explosion of social networks that allow rapid interactive communication across the internet. Much of this uses text: Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and wikis such as Wikipedia. There is also good support for multimedia on these networks, with specialist services such as Flickr for images and YouTube for video. Various Google services cover many of these media as well. For interacting face-to-face there are services such as Skype and FaceTime on Apple computers, iPhones, and iPads.

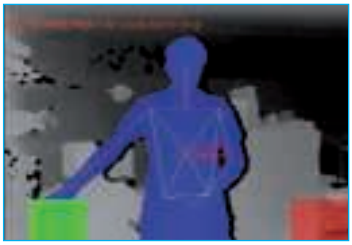
Deaf people have long been users of SMS texting and instant messaging services. Skype and similar services are even more useful to deaf people than to hearing people. There is something of a gap, however, when it comes to Web 2.0 technologies that allow people to post information, say on blogs and discussion forums, and modify and enhance other people's contributions on sites like Wikipedia and Facebook. These environments are not ideal for sign language users since they rely on the use of written language.

Posting sign language videos is one obvious solution, and is becoming more and more practical as typical broadband speeds increase rapidly and most new devices come with built-in video cameras. However, there are two significant problems: first, video is not anonymous, since anyone can recognise who made a particular contribution, which holds many people back

who otherwise would be eager to participate; second, people cannot easily edit and add to a video that someone else has produced, so a Wikipedia-like website in sign language is not possible.

Developing a sign wiki

UEA has been involved in Dicta-Sign, a three-year research project funded by the European Union (EU) Seventh Framework Programme (under grant agreement 231135) involving partners in Greece, France, the UK and Germany. The project aims to make online communications more accessible to deaf sign language users by developing the necessary technologies for two-way web-based interaction in sign language. Users sign to a device such as the Microsoft Xbox Kinect™ using dictation style. The computer recognises the signed phrases, converts them into an internal sign language representation, and signs the result back using an avatar.



A sign wiki has been created to demonstrate the Dicta-Sign technologies. The system acts like a sign language dictaphone, supporting recording, playback and editing. A user can put information onto the server using sign language by means of the Microsoft Kinect device.

A system developed by colleagues at the Centre for Vision, Speech and Signal Processing at the University of Surrey then matches the user's signs against a stored dictionary. The matched signs are used to generate the movements of the signing avatar. The user then reviews the recognised signs and can repeat any phrases that have been recognised incorrectly. If no Kinect device is available, then sequences can be created by selecting signs from the dictionary through a text search, using spoken language synonyms to expand the range of choices.

Content on the web is then assembled and presented via the signing avatars. In addition, the project has developed a dictionary with corresponding signs in four national sign languages. This enables simple sign language to sign language translation services, analogous to the Google translator, where the same sequences can be presented using signs from different languages.

Dicta-Sign thus aims to solve the main problems linked to sign language video. The avatar is anonymous, and its uniform signing style guarantees that contributions can be easily altered and expanded on by any sign language user. The prototype system is available on the web and has been evaluated by deaf users.

Future trends

For deaf people who use signing as their first language it is necessary to provide resources so they can create and view information in sign language. We believe that avatar signing has a role to play in developing internet resources, especially for Web 2.0 applications.

For long-lasting carefully crafted materials, video will provide a richer experience, although there will always be an issue of how to edit materials when required. For face-to-face communication between deaf people, video calls work perfectly, and for communication between deaf and hearing people it will always be best to use trained interpreters when available.

In between there is a range of communication where sign language recognition combined with avatar signing seems to have a role as indicated by the sign wiki demonstrator which enables comprehensible signed material to be created relatively quickly in a collaborative manner. It also seems that there will be a role for systems like SiSi that can convert speech to simplified sign language and provide some support when it is impractical to arrange for interpreters. Finally, in education many deaf young people seem attracted to cartoon-style characters who can sign.

John Glauert is a professor of computing science at the University of East Anglia.

Useful links

Avatar signing technology – http://vh.cmp.uea.ac.uk and www.uea.ac.uk/cmp/research/graphicsvision speech/vh

Dicta-Sign – www.dictasign.eu and http://signwiki.cmp.uea.ac.uk

Performing Hands – www.gamelablondon.co.uk/portfolio/performinghands.html

Get Out – www.bslbt.co.uk/kids/wicked_kids/get_out

Linguasign – www.linguasign.com

SiSi – www.sys-consulting.co.uk/web/Project_SISI.html

Access to fluent language

Anne Worsfold highlights the benefits of Cued Speech as a way for deaf children to acquire access to full spoken language

Communication is the key to our lives; we communicate through body language, eye gaze, facial expression, touch, voice, signs… yet the tragedy for many deaf children in the past is that they were given little chance to develop their communication skills and even less opportunity to access fluent language to help them develop literate thought. Cochlear implants have improved the situation for many deaf children, and Teachers of the Deaf continue to work very hard to ensure that deaf children do have the support to fulfil their potential. But my conversations over the last ten years have left me with the disturbing feeling that some parents and some teachers are content for deaf children simply to acquire a certain level of skill in communication only, rather than full language.

Take the following example. A hearing parent or teacher may say to a hearing child, 'Go and put your coat on, it is raining buckets outside so we need to give ourselves plenty of time to get there.' He or she may sign and say to a deaf child, 'Coat now. Rain. Time, go.'

Has the general message been communicated to the deaf child? Yes. Will the child go and put his or her coat on? Probably. Has he or she received a fair and full representation of *either* BSL or English? No!

Using true un-voiced BSL would have given a full account of the message; but so often in an attempt to give 'total communication' the two languages are mixed together and both are corrupted.

We all know that access to language early in life is vital: all children have an unrepeatable window of opportunity when they are primed for language development. This occurs in baby- and toddler-hood and not at school age. It is also known that vocabulary at the age of five is highly predictive of educational success and earnings at the age of 30. Some deaf children do hear enough (through aids or implanted devices) to understand and use full spoken language; many others do not, and their needs can be well met by some form of visual input.

Despite budget constraints leading to lack of time, ToDs work hard to maximise the chances that deaf children have to access good quality visual language input in their very earliest years. Training for parents in BSL has vastly improved over the years but only a minority of parents achieve a good language level of BSL, and even fewer achieve this in the early years when deaf children need it most. This is not surprising – how can parents learn a whole new language in such a short time when they have all the additional pressures that come from caring for young babies or toddlers? While we know that BSL is a full, complete language, signs in the hands of hearing parents of young deaf children often are not.

Communication *is* vital – it's not surprising that parents feel huge relief to have even the most basic communication skills for everyday situations; they want to enable their child to make his or her needs known and build a rapport with him/her. No wonder ToDs are happy to see this rapport developing but as professionals they are always mindful of the true *language* needs of that deaf child. They must find ways for that child's full potential to be unlocked through a fuller development of fluent language and they need to find ways to support the families and school to enable this to happen.

How then to give access to complete spoken language to children who can't hear it? Hearing parents need an easy-to-learn way to make their own language fully and visually accessible to their deaf child. Cued Speech will give this. It uses just eight handshapes in four positions near the mouth together with the lip-patterns of speech – you cue as you speak. Crucially it can be learnt in just 20 hours or fewer and although initially learners cue very slowly, fluency quickly increases with use.

There is a large body of research that shows its effectiveness. Professor Kelly Crain of the University of South Florida referred to just some of the research when he wrote, 'Deaf children of hearing parents who cue their native spoken language have been found to develop that language according to the same milestones as hearing peers. Hearing parents can learn to cue at a rate and accuracy level sufficient to deliver linguistically complex information to their deaf children within 2–3 months of learning the system. Deaf children exposed to multiple languages by fluent models of those languages can develop both languages and become bilingual in a fashion similar to hearing children.'

Cued Speech is a lip-reading tool that enables communication and using it will give deaf children access to complete language. They can visually and naturally absorb the spoken language of the home that their hearing family are already using and, as Cued Speech has been adapted for 68 languages and dialects, there really is no limit! Having this (visual) phonetic understanding of language serves deaf

children brilliantly when they later encounter the written form of the language as they learn to read and write.

Professor Kelly Crain wrote in his summary of research, 'Cueing provides children with access to complete language, including such function words as prepositions, often missed by deaf children from other communication backgrounds. Indeed, deaf children whose parents and teachers cue (and/or who work with skilled transliterators) have been found to develop the written forms of spoken languages in ways similar to hearing children of hearing parents.'

Cued Speech can be used in different ways: for example to give access to whole language, to support phonics teaching or to scaffold learning English through listening. Increasingly it is used with BSL or American or French sign languages to give access to both a sign language and a 'spoken' language.

When Cued Speech is used bilingually it differs from the more commonly accepted sign bilingualism.

Sign bilingualism – usually aims to give access to sign language as a first language and to spoken language such as English in its *written* form only. Connie Mayer and Gordon Wells describe how very difficult it is for deaf children to become fully literate through a sign language in their paper 'Can the Linguistic Interdependence Theory Support A Bilingual-Bicultural Model of Literacy Education for Deaf Students?' They write, '…proponents of bilingual-bicultural models of literacy education for deaf students claim that, if ASL is well established as the LI, then literacy in English (L2) can be achieved by means of reading and writing without exposure to English through either speech or English-based sign. In our opinion, this claim is based on a false analogy….'

Bilingualism with Cued Speech – either the 'spoken' or the signed language can be the first language. Access to a signed language for these children is primarily through native or professional users modelling the language for the child – at least in the early years when parents' signing skills are limited. Deaf children born into a BSL-using deaf family will usually have BSL as their first language and, should the parents wish it, a hearing family member or professional can model spoken language through Cued Speech for the child. In hearing families, the spoken language of the home, through Cued Speech, would be the first or main language. This enables deaf children to develop a native-like understanding of sound-based 'spoken' language just as hearing children do and they can learn to read using the same techniques.

Because the use of Cued Speech within sign bilingual education is a relatively new and innovative approach, the Cued Speech Association UK is in the process of drafting a document looking at the use of Cued Speech bilingually, called *Complete Bilingualism – how full access to both BSL and English could be achieved*. The authors, Cate Calder and myself, welcome comments.

The good news is that with Cued Speech, parents and children can learn not only to communicate but to use full language in a completely accessible way. Deaf children do not need family members to cue for them their whole lives – if it is used consistently and early, most deaf children will reach the stage where they only need Cued Speech occasionally for new vocabulary, or to clarify pronunciation.

Since the system of Cued Speech can be learnt in a matter of days, access to fluent language need not be delayed. It takes determination for hearing parents and professionals to lift their hands and cue for a deaf child but doing so can mean the difference between them developing language or not – and the payback, in terms of full language, is huge. It has never been easier to learn. The Cued Speech Association will provide a tutor for a family or professional group, e-learning can be accessed free and the Association now offers supporting tuition through Skype sessions as well as face-to-face tuition.

Contact AnneWorsfold@cuedspeech.co.uk if you would like to:

- discuss different uses of Cued Speech
- find out about training for yourself or families
- request our draft document *Complete Bilingualism – how full access to both BSL and English could be achieved.*

Anne Worsfold is the Executive Director of the Cued Speech Association UK (www.cuedspeech.co.uk).

Further reading

'Research Supporting the use of Cued Speech and Cued Language', Compiled by Kelly Lamar Crain, PhD, University of South Florida. 16-page summary free to download from www.cuedspeech.org.uk/index.php?page=111/

Cued Speech and Cued Language for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, edited by Carol J LaSasso, Kelly Lamar Crain and Jacqueline Leybaert. A scholarly but accessible 500-page book published in 2010 by Plural Publishing.

'Can the Linguistic Interdependence Theory Support A Bilingual-Bicultural Model of Literacy Education for Deaf Students?' Connie Mayer, Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf and Gordon Wells, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. http://jdsde.oxfordjournals.org/content/1/2/93.full.pdf/

Whatever Works at the Time

Drawing on personal experience, Janette Willis urges parents of deaf children to consider using a range of approaches to communication

In my experience, hearing parents of deaf children are particularly vulnerable to one overwhelming fear – that their child will be unable to communicate effectively in the hearing world. This makes them susceptible to the power of the professional who, because of their own training or experience, will want to recommend their own particular 'brand' of communication approach. This may mean promoting 'oralism', with the dire warning that a deaf child who is allowed to sign will not make the effort to speak clearly. The advice may be to follow the dictates of deaf culture through the use of fluent BSL as a first language, with the rules of spoken English taught through the medium of sign. A middle road of Total Communication, using spoken language alongside Sign Supported English (SSE), may be proposed. Or perhaps the Auditory Verbal approach will be advocated, where auditory training is emphasised and lip-reading discouraged.

Absolutely any of these communication clues could and should be used

Each professional may have complete faith in his or her particular brand, but requiring parents to follow just one approach (to the exclusion of others) can only be counterproductive, because each of these strategies inevitably has both strengths and weaknesses. It is also essential to acknowledge that, although digital hearing aid and cochlear implants have made the most amazing strides in recent years, the auditory information received through this technology is still nowhere near an exact replica of normal hearing.

The deaf child has to fill in the gaps and this takes considerable effort, concentration and skill. The whole process can be exhausting and this is bound to affect the deaf child's ability to cope in the hearing world.

As a result, the question has to be asked: Why limit the communication clues you are giving? Why issue absolutes: 'you must not use sign'; 'you must not use speech'; 'you must not use lip-reading', when actually deaf children desperately need every possible element of the communication process to make sense of the world around them? Encouraging voice and the optimum use of auditory information from the technology may be the ultimate aim, but sign language provides much needed extra support, lip-reading can be extraordinarily valuable and there is a whole world of non-verbal communication (facial

expression, pantomime, gesture) which can add vital extra pieces to the communication puzzle.

Absolutely any of these communication clues could and should be used (according to the needs of the child), so that successful communication occurs on every occasion. This approach merits a name, to promote its recognition as a strategy. It could be called 'Communication Without Boundaries' (CWB), 'Flexible Communication' (FC), 'Diverse Communication' (DC), or even 'Whatever Works at the Time' (WWATT).

Parents should be given permission to use WWATT without fear

All deaf children deserve the right to have confidence that whatever is being said, or whatever they are trying to say, a way will be found in each and every communication exchange to enable them to understand and be understood. In my experience with my own deaf child, WWATT works incredibly well in achieving this essential right, producing a confident adult communicator, well able to cope in the hearing world. Parents should be given permission to use WWATT without fear that they may offend the communication affiliations of their key professional. They need to be actively encouraged to choose their own unique combination of approaches on each occasion, so that they can meet the communication needs of their deaf child, every single time.

Janette Willis was working as a lecturer in nursing 20 years ago when her baby daughter was completely deafened by meningitis. Over the past two decades, Janette has become an involuntary specialist in deafness and deaf education. She is currently taking an unplanned sabbatical from her role as Academic Co-ordinator for Mary Hare Training Services, in order to receive treatment for cancer.

Defining the roadmap

Catherine White explains how Auditory Verbal Therapy can help deaf children with their communication issues by learning through listening

Communication is defined as the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writing or signs. Our role as educators of children with permanent hearing impairment is to equip the child to be a confident and competent communicator. The route by which this is achieved is determined by the family's long-term goals for their child.

Parents want to make well-informed choices on behalf of their deaf child, but information about communication and placement options is not always easily accessible. There are still many parents of newly diagnosed children who do not know that their child has the potential to develop spoken language through listening.

Auditory Verbal Therapy

Auditory Verbal Therapy is a parent-centred approach to enabling children with hearing impairment to learn to *talk* through *listening*. It focuses on the use of sound (audition) as the primary channel for learning and gaining meaning from the environment. Parents are at the centre of this approach and take a full and active part in every session with the Auditory Verbal (AV) therapist. In this way parents learn to provide the most productive and positive experiences to stimulate verbal communication. This approach is distinctive in the way it maximises the child's use of hearing as the primary sense for developing spoken language. The AV option is widely available in Australia, Canada and the USA and there is growing interest among families and professionals in the UK.

Why focus on listening alone?

We know that the auditory cortex is directly involved in speech perception and language processing. If we are interested in the typical development of speech and language and normal development, the maturation of the central auditory pathways is a precondition for that outcome. In the past, when we did not have the technology to allow early access to the brain, we could not provide it with sufficient quantity and quality of sound in time to develop the auditory centres for many children.

Communication through spoken language is, in part, an auditory process. The way in which neural connections are made in the brain is largely dependent on experience. Specialised nerves take information from the hearing sense organs, the cochleae, to the higher centres of the brain where we consciously understand what different sounds mean. In order to strengthen the connections of the pathways between the cochleae and the regions of the brain where we understand sound, our brains need to be repeatedly stimulated by sound – therefore, the most effective way of learning spoken language is through hearing.

A reduction in auditory stimulation (or a baby without optimal amplification) means that the millions of neural connections that are typically made when a baby first begins to hear in the womb are not being made. In the absence of sound, the brain reorganises itself to make better use of the other major senses, especially vision. In 2007, Professor Graeme Clark (cited in Carol Flexer's *The Auditory Brain: Conversations for Paediatric Audiologists,* 2011) reported that the competition from visual brain centres will actually dominate the auditory brain centres unless we focus on auditory brain access. In other words, if the auditory centres do not develop through receiving auditory input, the brain tissue will be used for other tasks and will no longer be available for auditory tasks.

The introduction of newborn hearing screening and the early fitting and management of hearing technology has enabled babies to hear and make neural connections between sound and meaning. However, even with optimal amplification, the hearing-impaired child's overall listening experience is significantly impoverished both in the quantity of time spent listening and the quality of what he or she hears.

By working primarily through listening, Auditory Verbal Therapy helps to reorganise the brain so that the auditory brain centres are as strong as the visual brain centres. This way, children can make full use of both modalities in everyday conditions. Learning through listening also means that a child will be better equipped to communicate in situations where visual information is limited or absent, for example on the phone, at a distance (using assistive listening technology) or in the back of the car.

An AV programme at AV[UK] typically lasts two to three years and consists of 20 fortnightly sessions per year. In the past five years, 80% of the children who completed their AV programme went on to mainstream school with age-appropriate spoken language. These outcomes are no longer exceptional. In fact, with good audiological management and auditory intervention from a ToD and speech and language therapist, these results are achievable.

Catherine White is an Auditory Verbal therapist and the Clinical Lead at AV[UK].

The Individual Learner Profile

Cheryll Ford and Dee Dyar explain the rationale behind a new method for monitoring and responding to changes observed in the auditory and communication capabilities of pupils at the Royal School for the Deaf Derby

The Individual Learner Profile (ILP) was devised at the Royal School for the Deaf Derby (RSDD) in response to challenging questions on learner 'differentiation'. It was designed as a simple, systematic and time-effective one-page profile and is used to monitor changes (or lack of changes) in aspects of a pupil's auditory/listening and linguistic (BSL, SSE and spoken/written English) behaviours as observed in routine everyday interactions rather than in a test context. The full ILP summary is completed after a minimum of two classroom observation sessions and informal discussions held with each pupil's teachers and key workers.

We will start by giving some background information on our ways of assessing and supporting pupils before sharing the outcomes obtained under five criterion-based components of the ILP:
- Home language background
- Auditory capabilities
- Categories of auditory performance
- Speech intelligibility rating
- Lip-reading competence.

All RSDD pupils aged from 3–19 are assessed using these criteria.

The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a child-centred day and weekly residential school that provides deaf children aged 3–19 with access to communication (English and BSL), literacy, numeracy and all curriculum areas. We aim to give learning and interaction opportunities with deaf and hearing peers through a 24-hour curriculum. BSL and English are equally valued, taught and are assessed formally with the emphasis on enabling all pupils to convey their individual needs, feelings and views effectively, in an age-appropriate and socially acceptable manner, using a variety of communication modalities.

All prospective RSDD pupils have an initial three-day multi-professional assessment, which includes residence where appropriate. As far as possible, parents and local support professionals are involved in this baseline assessment. RSDD teaching staff also value this time to co-work with the audiologist and specialist speech and language therapist, the school nurse, residence staff and other agencies. Information is also sought from cochlear implant centres, community-based therapists, specialist advisers, educational psychologists and so on. Along with a comprehensive assessment of language and literacy skills, staff are encouraged to observe and record their impressions of each prospective pupil's spontaneous social interaction strategies, linguistic effectiveness with deaf peers and also with deaf and hearing adults within and outside the classroom. Information gleaned during the initial assessment feeds into learning plans and targets for the first term of a pupil's placement.

At RSDD pupils benefit from being taught in small classes, by deaf and hearing teachers and support staff. Specialist speech and language therapists and the school audiology team work within the classroom and implement advisory, one-to-one or group sessions collaboratively, with teacher and key worker colleagues. Our day-to-day experience confirms that this is a positive and time-effective way of developing rapport and responding to the queries of teachers and form tutors about individual pupils' rate of progress in all areas. This enables speech and language therapists and audiology professionals to work in the classroom, to observe pupils in a non-intrusive way and to focus on listening and spoken language skills development for the 80% of RSDD pupils who currently gain auditory benefit from hearing aids or cochlear implants.

The information shared in the following tables is taken from the ILP completed on every pupil at RSDD at the start of academic year 2011–12. Table 1 illustrates how we have endeavoured to classify the home language backgrounds of our pupils.

Home language background		RSDD pupils (total 128)
1	Unknown/pre-classification (U/PC)	<1%
2	British Sign Language (BSL)	16%
3	British Sign Language + Sign Supported English (BSL + SSE)	14%
4	English + Sign Supported English (English + SSE)	49%
5	English as an additional language (EAL)	20%

Table 1: Home language background of RSDD pupils 2011–12

Of the current RSDD pupils, 30% come from a home language background where parents and siblings use BSL as their primary language. It is interesting, however, to observe in table 1 that approximately half of these families use *some* Sign Supported English (SSE) in social situations and in one-to-one communication meetings with RSDD staff. Many of these families have made spontaneous disclosures about their personal school experiences – both positive and negative – of communicating with hearing peers and adults, along with sharing their high aspirations regarding opportunities for their deaf child to develop both BSL and English language skills during their time at RSDD.

Approximately 20% of pupils come from a multilingual home language background where English is used as an additional spoken language (EAL) along with BSL.

Auditory capabilities		RSDD pupils
1	No hearing aids: awaiting hearing aid trial	4%
2	One hearing aid	13%
3	Two hearing aids	37%
4	One cochlear implant	20%
5	Two cochlear implants	3%
6	Hearing aid + cochlear implant	1%
7	Hearing aid elective non-user – may choose to use hearing aids in the future Long term non-user – appeared to gain minimal auditory benefit from hearing aids	2% 16%
8	Cochlear implant elective non-user – may choose to use a cochlear implant in the future Long term non-user – appeared to gain minimal auditory benefit from a cochlear implant	1% 3%

Table 2: Auditory capabilities of RSDD pupils 2011–12

Table 2 illustrates that 80% of RSDD current pupils are learning to use and benefit from hearing aids or cochlear implants. The eight ILP auditory capabilities descriptors were selected to enable us to compare differences observed in hearing aid and cochlear implant non-user rates and to reflect on individual cases, systematically, in more depth. Only 2.5% of pupils (one child) in the primary department do not use hearing aids with reliability. This child is profoundly deaf and from a deaf family background with age-equivalent BSL skills. 18% in the secondary department were classified as elective or long-term hearing aid non-users. Further investigations, however, indicate that four of these pupils have syndrome-related conditions that make them unable to benefit from hearing aids; two additional pupils come from deaf family backgrounds; one pupil has significant bilateral ossification due to meningitis and tried hard to learn how to use and gain benefit from hearing aids in the past. The remaining three pupils present with self-image and psychosocial issues and may consider using hearing aids in the future. 33% of post-16 pupils were classified as elective or long-term hearing aid non-users. Five of these pupils are from deaf family backgrounds; two pupils are profoundly deaf with additional learning difficulties; one pupil has autistic spectrum disorder and is a strong visual learner; one pupil was a late transfer to RSDD and comes from a multilingual home background, and the remaining two pupils are long-term hearing aid non-users for psychosocial reasons.

Only 12.5% of pupils in the primary department do not use a cochlear implant with reliability during school hours. This child has a complex social background and global developmental delay. In the secondary department 6.25% have become long-term cochlear implant non-users. In RSDD's post-16 department, only 12.5% of pupils have become elective cochlear implant non-users – helping us, as day-to-day practitioners, to dispel the myth that UK schools for the deaf only support poor or 'failed' cochlear implant users.

Since 2010, the categories of auditory performance (CAP) and the speech intelligibility rating (SIR) have been completed on every pupil at the start of the each academic year. CAP and SIR are validated outcome measures (NEAP 2 www.earfoundation.org.uk) widely reported in the cross-linguistic research literature. By completing them annually on RSDD pupils we can compare the variability in listening and talking skills observed across our pupils with findings reported on hearing aid and cochlear implant users at other types of educational placement.

Categories of auditory performance (CAP)		RSDD pupils
0	No awareness of environmental sounds or voice	26%
1	Awareness of/response to environmental sounds	14%
2	Responds to speech sounds	14%
3	Recognises environmental sounds	3%
4	Discrimination of speech sounds	31%
5	Understands common phrases without lip-reading	10%
6	Understands conversations without lip-reading	1%
7	Can use telephone with known speaker	1%

Table 3: Categories of auditory performance (CAP) of RSDD pupils 2011–12

These CAP outcomes illustrate that 74% of current RSDD pupils demonstrate auditory benefit from hearing aids or cochlear implants. We envisage that a proportion of the 26% of pupils classified as CAP 0: *No awareness of environmental sounds or voice* will develop at least some auditory skills in the future.

Speech intelligibility rating (SIR)		RSDD pupils
1	Pre-recognisable words in spoken language. The primary means of communication may be manual	38%
2	Connected speech is unintelligible. Intelligible speech is developing in single words (and social expressions) when context and lip-reading cues are available	21%
3	Connected speech is intelligible to a listener who concentrates and lip-reads	19%
4	Connected speech is intelligible to a listener who has little experience of a deaf person's speech	8%
5	Connected speech is intelligible to all listeners	14%

Table 4: Speech intelligibility rating (SIR) of RSDD pupils 2011–12

These SIR outcomes illustrate that 62% of current RSDD pupils are making a demonstrable rate of progress in speech production skills. The 38% of pupils classified as SIR 1: *Pre-recognisable words in spoken language* includes most but not all of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All pupils in primary and secondary departments are scheduled for a comprehensive annual assessment of their voice, articulation and phonology skills by the specialist speech and language therapists. This ILP data will help us to monitor or to investigate factors that may be affecting individual pupils' rates of progress in the acquisition of intelligible speech.

Lip-reading competence		RSDD pupils
1	Pre-formal assessment	16%
2	Single words *Closed-set without SSE using toys, pictures or game format*	28%
3	Social expressions *Modified open-set without SSE using toys or pictures*	26%
4	Simple phrases/conversations *Modified open-set without SSE + some vocabulary from outside the immediate context*	28%
5	Longer/complex sentences *Modified open-set without SSE + topic-based worksheets*	1%
6	Open-set social conversations *Without SSE*	1%

Table 5: Lip-reading competence of RSDD pupils 2011–12

Table 5 illustrates the outcomes obtained from our first attempt at classifying the lip-reading competence of RSDD pupils, including those who do not use hearing aids or cochlear implants and also children with limited speech intelligibility.

Only 16% of pupils were classified as pre-formal assessment; a combined total of 54% of pupils demonstrated an ability to lip-read single words or social expressions in highly structured (ie closed set) activities and an additional 29% of pupils were classified as able to maintain a simple conversation without sign support. Along with the CAP and SIR outcome measures described in tables 3 and 4, we plan to complete a lip-reading competence audit, on an annual basis, to complement the comprehensive standard assessment battery implemented by RSDD teachers.

In conclusion, the ILP is currently used to provide up-to-date information for parents, carers, school governors and so on. This information is used for research undertaken by a diverse range of undergraduate and postgraduate students and visiting researchers. As a criterion-based procedure, the ILP overcomes any strong personal or subjective views of individual teachers or therapists and enables us to look at individual pupils' rates of progress objectively over time.

All education staff in school, including the transition support communicators in the post-16 department, have access to the ILP summaries and report that they find the information especially useful in the case of transition or setting targets for new pupils.

The ILP can assist teachers to differentiate between deaf pupils who present with significant auditory or linguistic delay and those pupils who present with demonstrable 'hearing' thresholds but an inability to process or use spoken language due to co-occurring conditions.

We welcome feedback from BATOD Magazine readers. Please feel free to contact us if you would like further information about the Individual Learner Profile user guidelines and a list of research articles that influenced its development.

Cheryll Ford (principal@rsdd.org.uk) is the Principal of the Royal School for the Deaf Derby and Dee Dyar (dee.dyar@hotmail.com) is a specialist speech and language therapist.

Campaign conclusion

As the Now We're Talking campaign is wrapped up, Lindsay Wood and Pauline Hughes reflect on the end of an era for this lively consortium

'Everything comes to those who wait.'
'Nothing succeeds like success.'

These two proverbs reflect very accurately the decision taken by the management group of Now We're Talking (NWT) finally to call it a day as a consortium of like-minded organisations, campaigning and exhibiting under one banner. Of course, it is essential to say that each constituent member of the consortium is alive and well and continuing to prosper as individual organisations in their own right.

Readers of this publication may remember the article in the March 2008 edition, in which the background history of NWT was discussed. To recap, it was the Chairman of the Ewing Foundation, the late and much respected Malcolm McAlpine, together with the then Director of Deaf Education through Listening and Talking, Wendy Barnes, who embarked 13 years ago on a campaign to raise awareness of the sound auditory oral practices in deaf education alongside the emergent technological improvements available to hearing-impaired children.

Gradually along the way other organisations with similar philosophies of early diagnosis and the fitting of modern audiological devices joined the consortium. At its height, the NWT consortium numbered nine constituent members, ranging from deaf education charities providing support to families and professionals to schools for the deaf and therapy providers.

During our 13 years of operation, we have exhibited at professional conferences, provided considered and expert opinion, lobbied policy makers at the highest level on a whole range of issues and, of course, debated with others the significant progress being made in auditory oral deaf education combined with constant and consistent developments in technology.

We have attended over 250 conferences and exhibitions and have had exposure to well over 20,000 delegates – figures that are quite remarkable for a group of charitable organisations with limited funds in an increasingly difficult economic climate. We have waited 13 years to see services and technologies enabling deaf children to be taught orally – and in mainstream school – come to fruition, and we believe we have 'done our bit'!

The success is there to see and in the statistics – that more than 60% of profoundly deaf children starting full-time education are already fitted with a cochlear

implant and are going into mainstream education. This is not to say that such children do not need onward support – of course they do – but the times have changed, and for the better. We also acknowledge that there are profoundly deaf children who cannot access sufficient residual hearing and maybe have additional needs, so we welcome the current changes in admission policies of schools for the deaf offering and providing dedicated services to such children.

So, with reference to those two proverbs, we believe that we have succeeded in our aim of 'getting the message across' and our waiting time is now at an end (collectively as a consortium) – we believe we have achieved our goals.

Finally, we think it is fitting and appropriate to say a big 'thank you' to those organisations and companies we have had the privilege of networking with over the past 13 years. To close with another proverb: 'All good things must come to an end.'

For further information on auditory oral deaf education, contact:
www.ewing-foundation.org.uk
www.deafeducation.org.uk
www.elizabeth-foundation.org
www.maryhare.org.uk
www.speech-lang.org.uk
www.knightsfield.herts.sch.uk
www.stjohns.org.uk/

Lindsay Wood was Exhibitions Co-ordinator with the Now We're Talking campaign and Pauline Hughes was part of the NWT management group.

Working with Early Support principles

Sue Lewis comments on the extension of Early Support into the school years and beyond

Most Teachers of the Deaf will already be very familiar with the principles and practice of Early Support in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). As the original piloting of Early Support coincided with the roll out of newborn hearing screening we were fortunate within the field of deafness to be involved in many of the emerging initiatives within Early Support, such as the work on parent-led assessment, new models of working in partnership with families and new ways of evaluating partnership working and planning with others. The Monitoring Protocol for Deaf Babies and Children was a core product of these initiatives but, like all other Early Support materials, was devised as a tool for more effective working in partnership with families and for enabling them to understand and therefore provide for their child's needs more effectively.

The ethos and principles of Early Support are fundamental to the Government's strategy for supporting the well-being and achievement of all children, but particularly those who are vulnerable and/or have disabilities or needs. These principles are printed below and I would suggest that they should be appropriately placed at the heart of any sensory service or special school statement of values or vision statement. They are underpinned by a holistic view of intervention, one which sees working with families as the key to the child's achievement and well-being and practitioners as the gateway to services, not the gatekeepers. The Early Support training, materials and practices, including key worker guidance, the Monitoring Protocol and the Family Service Plan were devised to help bring these principles into practice.

Early Support principles

- The uniqueness of children and families is valued and provided for.
- The care that disabled children receive is based on joint assessment, planning and review processes that keep parents and carers at the heart of discussion and decision making about their child.
- Service delivery for children and families is integrated and experienced by them as holistic, co-ordinated and seamless.
- Families experience continuity of care through different phases of their engagement with services.
- Children's learning and development are monitored and promoted.
- Families are able to make informed decisions.
- Wherever possible, families are able to live 'ordinary lives'.
- Families and children are involved in shaping and developing services.
- Working practices and systems are integrated.
- Families can be confident that the people working with them have the training, skills and experience required to meet their child's needs.

In November 2011 the Department for Education announced the extension of Early Support to young people and families with children of all ages. The extension is one of six new contracts – totalling £6 million – handed out by the Government in a bid to help deliver key reforms to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Early Support promotes the provision of key working so that all families and young people have help to navigate the system, and it provides help with and advice on the child's, young person's and families' particular requirements and priorities. The Department for Education Green Paper on SEN and Disability identifies Early Support as a key approach to meeting the needs of such children and their families. Early Support has been successful in the early years – the aim now is to ensure that it informs and supports the development of an integrated model of working with disabled children and young people of all ages and their families.

Early Support will work with those involved in other SEND initiatives to develop an integrated approach supporting schools, children, young people and parents, bringing together Early Support and Achievement for All principles, approaches, materials and training. Members of the ES Trust Consortium, led by the Early Support Trust and the National Children's Bureau, have worked with Early Support for a number of years and include a range of voluntary organisations such as The Communication Trust and individuals, such as Elizabeth Andrews and myself. The remit for the Consortium is to:

- develop, deliver and sustain Early Support materials, resources and training and adapt them for use up the age range
- develop and deliver key working training
- ensure multi-agency, strategic engagement of the whole sector, including parents, children and young people
- ensure that parents, children and young people and the professionals who work with them take ownership of Early Support and key working and are able to sustain it beyond the funded period.

Regional facilitators		
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Sharon Kelly	North West	Sharon@estrust.org.uk
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Sue Lewis	East Midlands	s.lewis@maryhare.org.uk

A number of working groups have been set up to review materials, devise others and conduct training; all include parents and carers and all will also consult more widely – these include groups reviewing the developmental journals and monitoring protocol, the service audit tool and all training courses. At each stage of development there will be opportunities for families, schools and services to be involved in trialling and evaluating materials. I hope that providers for deaf children will be as involved as when we were rolling out this initiative in the EYFS. I will be helping with the revision of a number of ES resources and with training but I am particularly pleased to have been asked to lead the group reviewing the Service Audit Tool as a multi-agency planning and improvement guide.

Early Support regional facilitators have been appointed to every region. These are already contacting local authorities and health providers, working alongside Achievement for All consultants and the SEND pathfinders to ensure an integrated approach to partnership working with families and one that is focused on outcomes for the child and family.

The ES Trust Consortium is calling for the statutory, voluntary, community and private sector and parents and young people to join its endeavours to improve services for children and young people with additional needs. For more information or to be involved email Kim Bevan at kim@estrust.org.uk or contact your regional facilitator as listed above.

Sue Lewis is currently course leader for postgraduate courses at Mary Hare, Oxford Brookes and the University College of Wales, Newport. She also works independently as an inspector, adviser and consultant.

Action research makes a difference

Alison Carter and Ruth Swanwick highlight the benefits of action research using examples and reflections from Longwill School

In 2010 the Sign Bilingual Consortium launched a 'Year of Reading' to explore ways in which action research by teachers in schools can enhance the reading experiences and outcomes for deaf learners (reported in the March 2011 BATOD Magazine). Collaborative research and development work is a characteristic of this consortium, which seeks to develop and maintain research/practice partnerships that directly impact on deaf children's learning and benefit the educational community as a whole. You can read more on the web pages at www.signbilingual.co.uk/

As part of the Year of Reading interested members of the consortium met at Leeds University to talk about developing their research in schools using an action research methodology. We discussed different schools' research questions and issues. We reviewed the action research cycle and looked at ways of relating this to individual questions. There is more on the action research cycle at www.thereadingrhizome.com/

What did it involve?

As part of this initiative, practitioners at Longwill School decided to 'test' both the inside and outside spaces at the school (classrooms, corridors, indoor tents and outdoor dens) to see whether building alternative learning environments motivated the children to read, raised standards and improved progress. Every teacher approached an action research question from a personal perspective. Some looked at increasing the use of the outdoor space with the aim of enhancing literacy; others explored issues around motivation, using drama to promote reading skills, or tested how reading in different environments can improve recall skills.

As part of a parallel 'Creative Partnerships Project' the school also worked with several creative practitioners to develop thinking about the potential of action research and creativity to raise standards in reading. Two days were dedicated to developing staff skills, knowledge and understanding of creative approaches to teaching and learning. This encouraged professional dialogue across the school and reinforced a reflective culture. Twilight CPD sessions were devoted to talking about individual action research cycles and sharing new ideas. Staff were asked to consider what action research involved and then to develop a sentence that described what 'research' entailed.

Finally, they decided that research… is all about investigating and questioning in order to progress thinking and practice in one focused area. It involves fact-finding, planning, discovery, experimentation, reflection and also critical analysis and change.

After much preparation every teacher planned and began his or her action research and at the end of the cycle all the teachers distilled their research process and findings into one poster and made a disseminated presentation to colleagues. Since then this team has agreed on the key messages and actions which will now form part of their school-wide practice.

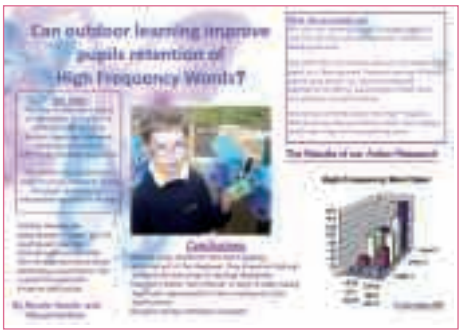
What were the outcomes?

The action research posters produced by teachers from schools and services across the Sign Bilingual Consortium, including Frank Barnes School and Exeter Academy, were shared at the Year of Reading Conference in October 2011. Longwill School provides some examples and commentary on their work here.

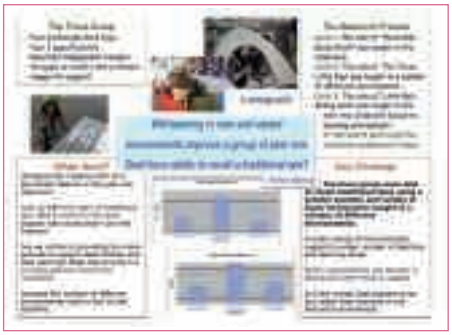
Erin Straw describes her Year 4 action research project: 'I focused on the higher ability boys in my group. The pupils were trying to translate English phrases into BSL. I realised that while they could read all the Year 4 and Year 5 medium frequency words with ease, they could only decode words at a literal level (did they really believe that when "fires went out" they actually left the room?). So I prepared drama activities in the drama studio and in our outside reading den. This enabled the pupils to act out the deeper meaning of the text within the context of the story. This was very powerful! Their engagement in reading increased dramatically and all showed substantial gains in reading ability.'

Charlotte Clough talks about her project with Year 2: 'I focused my research on one child who seemed to be

underperforming and I wanted to see what I could do to help her with reading. She did not seem able to retain the Reception/Year 1 high frequency words and I thought that this could be improved on if I found different ways for her and all her classmates to learn. First, I monitored her progress using existing strategies and then I took the tasks outside (in the hall, on the playground, in the park) and we played literacy games in a more physical and hands-on manner. Her rate of acquisition of new vocabulary rose from +12% pre-intervention to +30% post-intervention. I think the learning style favoured a more kinaesthetic approach and was more meaningful to her.'



Alison Fentem and Nicole Hastie describe their project with Year 3: 'Our pupils found retention of the Reception and Year 1 high frequency words very tricky and this was having a really negative impact on their reading. Clearly, whatever we were doing wasn't working particularly well so we decided to try a more kinaesthetic approach. We went everywhere outside the classroom: the hall, playground, the woods and our own outside space which adjoins our classroom. Also, we adopted a more games-based approach inside the classroom. We found the pupils to be more motivated and engaged using this approach. They found it fun, and knowledge and retention improved significantly.'



Helen Barnett reports on her work with Year 1: 'My pupils' memory skills weren't very good. They had a very small repertoire of stories within their own experience and this made it quite challenging for them when they were asked to create and recreate their own stories. I focused on three different traditional tales and we learnt about them in many varied environments. Each time the children were asked to recount them and this was analysed. I found that the important ingredient was not one particular location – rather it was the variety of environments in which the children learnt. I discovered that it is important to find a learning environment which is "fit for purpose" and that there is not one single "better" environment.'

Suzanne Paulson explains her research in the Foundation Department: 'I wanted to promote interest in story and engage pupils in the narrative process. We read the story inside and then took our learning outside into the woods. We filmed the pupils as they acted out the story in full make-up and costume. From that we created a bilingual signed storybook using semacode technology on the PSPs. We collated baseline data using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and re-assessed them at the end of the action research cycle. They had all made significant progress. We found them to be more engaged in reading, more enthusiastic and they were asking more questions about the characters and plot structure.'

Inspired?

If you are keen to develop an action research project yourself, the team at Leeds University will facilitate and support your work. You can get in touch with Ruth Swanwick, Paula Clarke or Ruth Kitchen via the Leeds web pages. www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research/inclusive/projects.php?project=111&page=1/

You will also find a useful action research pack at www.thereadingrhizome.com to help get you started. Your research may be about reading or another classroom issue or area of development for your school. Longwill is taking its action research skills forward in 2012 to begin new projects based around its 'Year of Speaking and Listening'.

These examples speak for themselves but as a school that has fully engaged in this process, Longwill's conclusion that action research linked to classroom practice improves teaching and learning, engages colleagues in professional dialogue and raises standards is a strong recommendation for others to give it a go.

Alison Carter is the Deputy Head at Longwill School in Birmingham and Ruth Swanwick is a senior lecturer in deaf education at the University of Leeds. Alison and Ruth gratefully acknowledge the time and effort, posters and commentary from all of the practitioners involved.

The best options

Is a mainstream education falling short for some of our deaf pupils? Peter Gale urges you to speak out if you feel that improvements could be made or other options considered

I have thought long and hard about sending this article for consideration. The last thing any of us needs is to stimulate an unhelpful argument between those who work in mainstream inclusion settings and those in special schools. After all, we all want the same things for deaf children. But sometimes I wonder whether those of us working in the special sector are actually lacking the courage to speak out about issues we feel really strongly about and whether some deaf children are suffering because of the absence of healthy debate. Just for the record, I know there are many highly successful deaf pupils doing well in their mainstream placements and thriving. In fact, whenever I mention a Mary Hare success I repeat that phrase, constantly trying to avoid the accusation of bias.

But I meet pupils seeking placement in Years 8, 9, 10 and 12, some of whom bring horror stories about their previous placements and the way they have come to feel about school and about themselves. I recently asked them to email me their experiences for a talk I was giving. I doubt that many of the people who have overseen these particular placements are magazine-reading BATOD members, but here are just one or two examples, which, if nothing else, might convince you that there are things we need to talk about. How about 'I had to sit at the back of the class because my surname begins with X' (letter changed to protect the innocent)? Or 'There was a unit in my school, but they said I wasn't deaf enough so I wasn't part of it.' 'None of the videos in my class had subtitles.'

These are easy examples. We can all harrumph and say that this would never happen in our service. More challenging, but possible to overcome with good management is, 'The class was noisy and the teacher moved about so I couldn't hear or lip-read them good enough. When I wore the radio aid then I didn't like the noises it made when the teacher shouted at someone or it rubbed on clothes or a necklace and it gave me headaches sometimes and distracted me when I was trying to work hard or the TA was trying to talk to me.'

What follows is harder to manage: 'I didn't have many friends in my old school due to me being deaf and I couldn't keep up with the speed of the discussion that was taking place.' All the circle time in the world will not help a young person who feels fundamentally different and alone.

Having spoken to these young people, their issues seemed to fall into three categories:

- those which could and should be easily fixed
- those which with concerted effort could be improved
- those which are nigh on impossible to change.

Ask the deaf children you work with how many birthday parties they have been to this year

Here are five things which young people have said to me and which seriously affected the success of their mainstream placements. And by the way, several of them are implant users and one or two have moderate losses, which is food for thought in itself.

'I didn't have many friends.' The lack of real friendships is a major issue for these young people and one which we ignore at our peril. Ask the deaf children you work with how many birthday parties they have been to this year.

'They didn't treat me as clever.' The cocktail of individual support and pre- and post-tutoring can make pupils feel 'thick'. Some gradually migrate to lower sets, not because of their actual ability but because of their problems accessing the curriculum or the probably mistaken belief that the language will be more appropriate for them.

'I was embarrassed by support.' It shouldn't surprise us that at an age when many pupils don't want to leave the house because they think they have a 'massive spot', they are going to be more than slightly put off by having a grown-up attached to them for large parts of the day.

'I didn't like my radio aid.' There are serious issues here, both in terms of management and auditory experience. Whether the deaf pupil is tasked with trying to lasso the headteacher at the start of assembly, or privy to other people's private conversations, or forced to listen at an excellent signal-to-noise ratio to the teacher while being helped by the teaching assistant, the radio aid, which has so much potential for good, is a real problem for many deaf learners. (By the way, is that notion of 'taking responsibility' really fair? Why should the deaf child have to go back to the unit to put the aid on charge while the others line up for lunch?)

'I hated being the odd one out.' With resource bases closing and parents requesting *the* local school, not *a* local school, deaf children have never been so isolated. For me, this is the one aspect of the current manifestation of inclusion which people will look back on and wonder just what we were thinking of. Whether you are enjoying a 'full English' in the Punch and Judy in Marbella or attending a school reunion, you are looking for shared experiences and people who are like you. Young deaf people *must* get a chance to enjoy experiences with real peers – people like them.

Deaf youngsters are still saying that teachers move around too much

And what was the biggest issue for these deaf children in mainstream schools? They couldn't hear. To anybody outside the profession this would be pretty much a given, but it might come as a surprise to some of us. As ToDs we know the benefits of the aids and the implants and the assistive devices. Unfortunately, all too often, these benefits are lost to nightmarish acoustics, with 30 metal pencil cases clattering away and teachers speaking approximately twice as fast as the student can process. If you think I'm over-egging it, look at the research into monaurally deaf children and the impact of their loss on educational outcomes. And historically, they were treated as normally hearing. Despite some really good training and some dogged work by ToDs, deaf youngsters are still saying that teachers move around too much and speak while facing the board.

So there we are. I've done it. I will now wait for the response from colleagues across the country. But as I've hinted at above, I'm probably preaching to the converted and the vast majority of readers of this Magazine would not allow what I describe (or at least the things they have the ability to change). But these deaf teenagers were telling their truth and it needs to be heard. And of course, for every young person who, with or without the help of family or professionals, has managed to find the way to our door, there must be others feeling like this who see no prospect of anything different.

I'll leave you with the words of a 14-year-old girl that I found the most moving of all the responses I received. I quote her, not to blow the trumpet of my school, but because of the aching sadness her words show in the placement which did not work out. She says, 'I didn't have any friends and was very lonely because I was deaf and kept getting bullied by people saying deaf names. I didn't have confidence to make friends with other people because I was too scared they wouldn't accept me or like me. At Mary Hare I like to do lots of activity with my friends and being able to socialise with them and talk about girl things like I couldn't do before.' A significant challenge lies in her words. She's not asking for the world, just to have some friends and be able to talk about 'girl things'.

What do I conclude from all of this? Well, I'm not suggesting that all deaf pupils should be returned to special schools. But I am suggesting that there is some practice out there which is not as good as it could be. All of us, whatever our setting, need constantly to be challenging ourselves to improve our practice and that, of course, includes Mary Hare. My other point is that whatever setting you work in, if the writing is on the wall and the child needs something different, be confident enough in your success with the majority not to stand in that child's way. It may not be your fault that it hasn't worked out, but to know that to be the case and to allow things to carry on, even resisting the young person's cries for help, cannot be right.

Peter Gale is the Vice Principal of Mary Hare School.

***Editor's note:** As Peter suggests in this article, some readers will find the content controversial. As he also suggests, he hopes for a response. I too, as Editor, would welcome responses so please let me have your thoughts for possible inclusion in a subsequent edition.*

A drumming day

For deaf pupils at Hameldon Community College, the summer term last year culminated in a fun day of drumming. Penny Rowbottom has the story

At the end of the summer term last year, the Hearing Support Department of Hameldon Community College, Burnley hosted a fun drumming day. The event was open to deaf children in Years 5 and 6 who attend local mainstream schools, those in primary resourced provision and in special schools for the deaf, as well as those attending local mainstream secondary schools and other secondary resourced provisions. It also gave staff and pupils the opportunity to showcase the magnificent new school, which opened in September 2010.

In total, 23 children enjoyed learning to play dhol drums in two workshops led by Dhamak Beats and joined in team activities in the sports hall, led by our own PE staff. The fact that staff were prepared to commit so much of their own time is evidence of their commitment to the deaf children in the school.

The event culminated in a performance for parents, friends and professionals who support us in various ways, parents of pre-school deaf children, and past students and the Headteacher. Our past students are fantastic representatives for deaf young people and excellent role models for our current students. They enjoy visiting us as it provides them with an opportunity for keeping in touch and it is great for parents to see how successful and confident they are. They are an excellent advert for the provision.

It was important that the event was free for the children and I am fortunate to have a small amount of money from local charitable sources, which I can access through the school fund. Despite the current

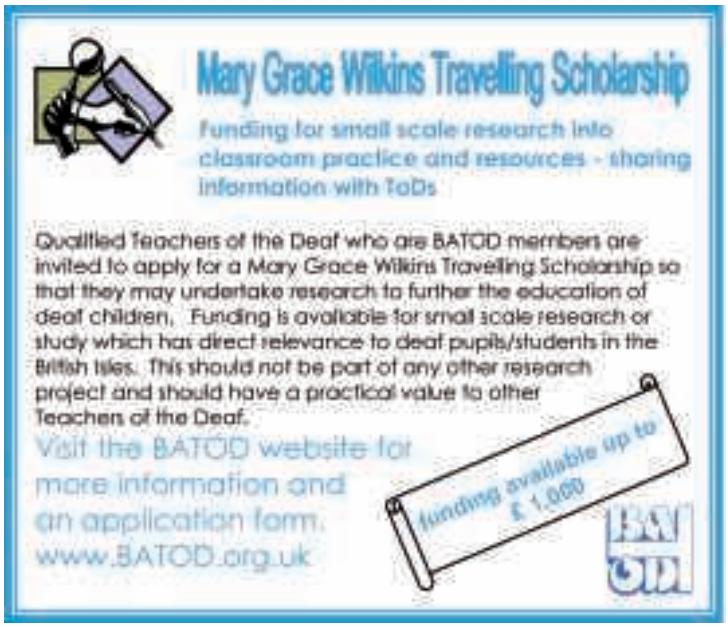
economic situation, it has been my experience that local charities will continue to support deaf children.

Drumming is a great experience for deaf children – everyone can do it and it is an exciting, stimulating and fun activity. Although the leaders may have some initial anxieties about working with deaf children, these are quickly dispelled – but it is important for the Teachers of the Deaf to join in!

All the children had a wonderful day and this will certainly be the first of many such events.

Penny Rowbottom is Manager of the Resource Base and also school SENCO at Hameldon Community College in Burnley.

***Editor's note:** Please let us know of any interesting, exciting and positive events which you would like to share with other readers.*



BATOD was there representing you...

Between the NEC meetings, members of BATOD attend various meetings that are of particular interest to Teachers of the Deaf. This list is not exhaustive. Your representatives at the meetings listed included: Gary Anderson, Andrea Baker, David Couch, Mary Fortune, Mary Gordon, Paul Simpson, Karen Taylor, Ann Underwood

Date	External participants	Purpose of meeting	Venue
January			
12	Birmingham University	Annual Course Consultative committee; lecture to students	Birmingham
13	NatSIP	Project Group and Reference Group meetings	Sense, London
16	DESF	Termly meeting	AHL, London
23	CRIDE	Regular survey meeting	Frank Barnes School
31	NatSIP	Working day	Hamilton House, London
31	UK HAB	Regular meeting	London
31	The Communication Trust	Regular meeting	NCVO, London
February			
10	French Assn of ToDs	Presentation to annual conference	Chambéry
22	FLSE	SEND Conference	London
27	Access Consultation Forum	Regular meeting	Ofqual, Coventry
29	NatSIP	Equality Act seminar	Hamilton House, London
March			
10	Maney	Meeting with Journal publisher	Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth
21	NatSIP	Project Group and Reference Group meetings	Sense, London
26	AAQAG	Regular meeting	Cardiff
27	The Communication Trust	Regular meeting	NCVO, London
29	Life and Deaf 2	Launch event	Southbank Centre, London

Please inform the Executive Officer, Paul Simpson, if you know of any meetings where you feel representation on behalf of Teachers of the Deaf would be of benefit. Although there is no guarantee that BATOD would be able to attend every meeting, situations could be monitored and the interests of ToDs represented.

Kenyan school days

Inspired by her friend's work at Kamatungu School for the Deaf in Kenya, Rosemary Gardner took time out from her busy schedule to visit and lend a hand

Some years ago, a friend and colleague, Helen Moorehead, left her job as Teacher of the Deaf in a unit for the hearing-impaired here in Northern Ireland to work in Kenya. Quite by accident, she discovered in a remote and extremely poor area, a high number of deaf children with no available provision. Due to the treatment of malaria with quinine, there was a particularly high incidence of deafness. For most of the children, it was literally a choice between death through lack of treatment or deafness through the treatment. What shocked Helen was the fact that these children were often either rejected and literally cast out by their tribes and families or beaten continually to force them to speak or to 'beat the deafness' out of them. In 2006 when Helen discovered these unwanted children, many of them did not even know they had a name.

Helen's dream, when she started, was to build a school where the children could board, as most of them would have had to walk for a number of hours to and from their homes. She started off in 2007 with five children and one teacher (herself); in January 2012, she had 49 on the roll and six teachers. The school is now recognised and registered by the Government of Kenya and there is a Headmaster, with Helen as Director. The children communicate by and are educated in Kenyan Sign Language, which is a little like American or International Sign Language.

Two years ago, I discovered that the children had not yet been tested or fitted with hearing aids and were therefore not able to access sound or speech. Some of them had had hearing until they lost it and so I felt there must be language to build on. I began working on a fascinating project to get the children properly tested and fitted with hearing aids. I was also anxious to make this a sustainable project so that if and when Helen leaves, it could carry on. I began to fundraise as much as I could, also setting to work on how we could carry out what we needed to do.

For a while, I felt as if I was going round in circles and wondered if I was ever going to achieve what I wanted. First, I discovered an audiologist in Nairobi who said he would travel out to Marimanti to do the testing, take the ear-mould impressions and fit the aids. However, we quickly found out that he was 'on the make', charged a phenomenal amount for doing very little and was also not good at working with children. So it was back to the drawing board. After months of corresponding with many people, we suddenly got the break we needed. Helen discovered that an education officer in the Marimanti area called Maitima who had some

training in testing and in making ear-moulds could do the testing if I could get him an audiometer. Wonderful! I also found a contact in Northern Ireland who told me about the Sound and Sight workshop attached to Durham Prison where they could recondition old hearing aids for us free of charge and, when this was done, 50 were sent to me. Maitima proceeded to test each child and their audiograms were posted to me. I looked at the

hearing aids, put them through a test box and attempted to advise which aid might be appropriate for each child.

The other aspect of this project was the fact that in such a remote area, batteries are extremely hard to buy. After some investigations, I found a company in South Africa that provided solar-powered battery chargers and batteries to go with them (this was the most expensive part of the project).

And so we decided to go out to the school and visit, which is what I did last July, accompanied by my

Helen – a small person with huge vision

patient and supportive husband Paul. The journey to the school was long, dusty and tiring. We stayed in a guest house near the school which was, to be honest, very basic. It was winter there but it seemed very hot to us. And the food was… well, different, but what a privilege it was for us to see first hand what Helen had achieved and what an inspiration she is! It was truly wonderful to see the children communicating so well and I began to learn a little Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) too. In Helen's class, the children's understanding of grammatical structures in their writing of English was most impressive. At the request of Helen and the Headmaster, I spent the week testing the children and training the teachers to use the audiometer. Paul spent the week painting and planting, which was a great change for him from his usual job as an optician! I had taken another 100 hearing aids with me (again sent from Durham Prison) and I attempted to test the children's aided listening. I was able to see the set-up where the children put the chargers out in the sun each morning and I tried to encourage the practical use of them. The children were so thrilled to have the hearing aids and Helen told us that when they were first given them many became very emotional that they could 'hear' again and people looking on said it was a miracle. I left a list of children I felt would benefit

from seeing an ear, nose and throat surgeon as there were a number who had conductive losses superimposed on the sensorineural loss. I hoped that this would be paid for by the Hearing Aid Fund. However, I am not sure that this has been done as yet. At the end of the week, I used a music resource to show how to encourage aided listening to develop.

We plan to go out again this summer and I would like to focus on developing aided listening. We have a number of speech trainers to take out (again supplied by Durham Prison) and I want to demonstrate a few activities the teachers could do. Any practical suggestions, resources or thoughts on this would be gratefully received. I would also like to know a little more KSL – but to my surprise Amazon does not do KSL books!

For our BATOD Northern Ireland summer meeting this year in May, we are planning to hold a dinner and raise money for the school. If you would like to come to be part of this evening, we would be delighted to see you! Come along to support us and spend a few days in Northern Ireland!

Rosemary Gardner is Head of the Sensory Support Service for the Southern Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland.

Studying Swedish FM systems

Having won a trip to Sweden with PC Werth, Jo Garvey and Wasfee Khan share their observations of Swedish deaf education and the use of the Comfort Audio digital FM system

As Teachers of the Deaf, we are aware of the importance and benefits of enhancing the listening environment for our deaf students and their peers, and we are fortunate enough to work in a borough committed to providing the best possible acoustic learning environment for deaf pupils.

While Soundfield systems have revolutionised the listening experience for children in mainstream classrooms and provisions, the personal FM systems still provide the best access to the teacher's voice even in traditionally difficult situations. In the quest to investigate new developments in FM systems and listening experiences, we set off on a communication study trip to Sweden with PC Werth and five other lucky competition winners.

Our acoustic adventure began early, but after a smooth landing in Gothenburg we were ready for our first taste of Swedish deaf education. On arrival at Kannebäcksskolan (a school for the deaf and children with speech and language difficulties) it was obvious that creating a good listening environment was a priority; classrooms were designed to reduce reverberation and each space had been acoustically treated to absorb echoes and minimise background noise.

Pupils were taught in groups depending on their mode of communication and age. Loop systems, used in each room, automatically synchronised hearing aids and audiological equipment (in Bromley the children use ear-level receivers). Comfort Audio conference microphones were used to allow pupils to access sounds around the table, facilitating more natural discussions. A modern foreign language lesson was observed; a group of oral teenage students with a severe hearing loss utilised the available technology to demonstrate their skills to reason and persuade in impressively fluent English. Spaces for individual study as well as group teaching allowed pupils to begin to take responsibility for their own learning.

Having observed the equipment being used, we were looking forward to getting hands-on experience and enhancing our knowledge of the FM system at the Comfort Audio research facility. Our initial impression was that the digital FM system did not appear to differ greatly from other traditional FM systems, with transmitter and receivers working together to allow pupils to access the lesson as if they were within one metre of the speaker. However, the listening experience was unexpected. The fully digitalised system appeared to give a cleaner signal and background noise was significantly reduced.

In Sweden, a flexible mix-and-match approach allows hearing impairment services to combine systems to match the needs of their pupils. While standalone systems are used for deaf pupils in mainstream schools, the 'push to talk' transmitter/receiver system provides opportunities for groups of deaf pupils to hear each other directly, with clarity, avoiding the need for every contribution to be relayed by the teacher, and thus fostering independence.

The study trip confirmed the progressive nature of Swedish deaf education, which provides a platform for audiological developments. The rigorous management of the acoustic environment was inspiring. The proof of success is still to unfold but tracking pupil performance should, over time, show that maximising the listening environment for deaf students and investing in good technology can improve educational outcomes. Our team in Bromley is now looking forward to trialling this equipment and receiving pupil feedback. Will they agree with us?

Jo Garvey and Wasfee Khan are Teachers of the Deaf, working for the London Borough of Bromley's peripatetic hearing team. Teachers can find out more about the Comfort Audio range from PC Werth on 020 8772 2700 or by visiting www.pcwerth.co.uk/

Transition guidance

Vicki Kirwin reports on new guidance to ease deaf teenagers' move to adult services

In November 2011 NDCS launched new Quality Standards in Transition from Paediatric to Adult Audiology Services: Guidelines for professionals working with deaf children and young people.

A definition of transition

Transition happens throughout a person's life, from the early years up to adulthood. The process of transition from paediatric to adult audiology services begins when children are being cared for by paediatric services and continues after they have moved to adult services, for as long as is appropriate for that individual. Transition should address the holistic needs of young people, including their physical health, mental health, educational or vocational needs, and social care needs.

Transition planning in the health service must secure optimal health care for young people but it is equally important to ensure that their wider needs and their aspirations for the future are at the centre of the planning process. Although these standards have been written for professionals in audiology services, we believe that because of the potential long-term implications deafness can have on young people socially, in higher education and employment all transition services for deaf young people must be integrated, requiring quality multi-agency working. This will help to ensure that work is not duplicated and that those with key relationships with deaf young people are aware of the range of possible transitional issues that may affect them. The principles underpinning this guidance therefore are applicable to all transition services for deaf young people whether they are health, education or social care sector based. We know that this journey of change will be different for every deaf young person and suggest that the guidance is useful for working with young people from the age of 14 years, which corresponds with transition planning in school from Year 9 onwards.

Transition and deaf young people

Transition coincides with a period of rapidly changing physical, psychological, social and educational development. Young people may be under considerable stress, from exams and moving on to higher education or work. Transition processes need to reflect the wider context of a young person's life at this stage. For deaf young people this may be a significant time in terms of identity development. Deaf young people may have different levels of engagement with the audiology service depending on how they are feeling at different times about themselves and their deafness. The deaf community does not view itself as disabled but instead celebrates its unique language and culture. Peer relationships may take on particular significance and the need to fit in may be very strong at this stage.

NDCS therefore believes it is vital to develop transition services that:

- are sensitive to the individual needs of deaf young people and their families
- take a holistic view of the deaf young person and his or her family
- help prepare deaf young people for transition and promote independence
- are developed and managed through close co-operation between agencies and professionals involved in the deaf young person's care.

NDCS first published quality standards in transition between paediatric and adult audiology services in 2005 which were based on the Department of Health's Modernising Children's Hearing Aid Services project (MCHAS, 2000–2005). Since these standards were published several projects across the UK have been undertaken, including consultation with deaf children and young people and development of transition services, as well as resources to support deaf young people during the transition period. However, good quality transition services are not yet widely available. There are several models for good transition and there is no clear evidence that one is superior. The revised document therefore does not attempt to be prescriptive in terms of what a good transition service looks like. Instead, it contains six quality standards based on the themes identified from the current literature on transition: the transition policy and pathway; involving deaf young people and their families in service development; working in partnership with other services; developing independence and preparing for transition; communicating with deaf young people; and information. Each standard is accompanied by examples of good practice and links to further supporting resources.

The quality standards can be downloaded or ordered free of charge from www.ndcs.org.uk or by calling the Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880.

Vicki Kirwin is the Development Manager (Audiology) at NDCS.

Life & Deaf lives on

Helena Ballard provides an update on the latest activities of Life & Deaf 2

Life & Deaf was a highly successful poetry project in which deaf children explored their identities through poetry created in English and British Sign Language. They later performed these poems in Greenwich in 2006 and published a book and DVD.

Life & Deaf 2 extended this award-winning project nationwide, through the publication and dissemination of a Life & Deaf 2 Workbook and via the website www.lifeanddeaf.co.uk/ We have led workshops and spoken to many groups of professionals and colleagues over the past few years and have been delighted by the positive reactions that we have received. Penelope Beschizza, teacher of deaf students, BSL and deaf studies, provides some recent feedback, 'I saw the earlier Life & Deaf events at City Hall with deaf students from Southwark College, who were impressed with the variety and creativity of the signed poems by young deaf people from Greenwich. Fast forward four years and I accompanied colleagues and deaf students from Sedgehill School Hearing Impairment Unit in south east London for the recent Life & Deaf day of workshops in Greenwich. It was a fab day, in wonderful buildings, with various workshop leaders, including BSL deaf poet Richard Carter. The ripple effect from a fully accessible and interactive day with many students from other hearing impairment units and deaf support centres is still happening today. The effect is evident through seeing the gradual unlocking of deaf identity (the "I'm OK, I'm deaf, life goes on... approach") and creative cognitive skills among some of our deaf students who participated in the workshops. The ripple effect quietly benefits families, friends and the students' learning too.'
Recently we have heard of groups of students across the country presenting their own Life & Deaf events. This thrills us as we really want the concept to be owned and used by as many people as possible.

Poetry from around 200 students is now displayed on our website. The span of subject matter and emotions portrayed is vast.

Life & Deaf 2 poetry – some examples

'In the morning all is quiet
As quiet as a deserted island
My world suddenly appears with my wonder of science
My key to a new world.'

'Peace at last with my two magicians, one on the left one on the right.'

'Every night I ask myself why am I deaf?
Is the answer far in Mars?
Or maybe it is all the way in the stars.
Did something go wrong in outer space?
The answer might be in a different place.'

'I hate being deaf. I can't hear my screaming. This is the worst ever.'

'And when some people talk
I don't understand them
They talk too fast
Like they're saying
"XEYIDAILYMMOURRDINK"
roaring like a car
VRRROOOOOM
It's like I'm in another world.'

'Soon I'll get a new implant. I feel excited. Soon I will hear cars go both ways. I will be safe.'

The Greenwich workshops

In May and July 2011 70 young deaf poets who had submitted poetry, photos and drawings to our website came to Greenwich to participate in a day of creative workshops. The students rotated around four workstations where art, visual and signed poetry, spoken word and performance were used as media through which the children could explore and share their individual experiences and feelings about their deafness.

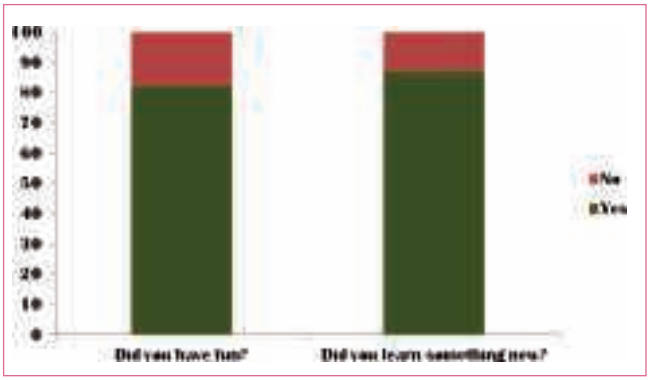
The children came prepared with poems and images that had significance for them. One by one they were invited to share these in small groups. Developing the children's creative output was secondary to exploring and discussing their feelings and experiences, developing their emotional literacy and forming networks and friendships. Each group was facilitated by a creative professional, an interpreter and a Teacher of the Deaf or specialist speech and language therapist.

Themes such as cochlear implants, managing technology, isolation in family and friendship groups, pride in sign language and feeling somehow 'different' were raised by the children and explored. It was interesting to see how varied the children's responses were to similar experiences; the children learnt to lead discussions themselves, to accept the perspectives of others and to present their own views, even when these were painful or contrasting. The atmosphere in each group was supportive, respectful and sensitive.

Throughout the day each child was encouraged to face a number of new challenges. Some had never signed before or worked with an interpreter, others had never thought about the mechanics of voice production or considered what their voice meant to them. To support the group dynamics, children were grouped according to communication mode but there were many opportunities to mix with children and adults with differing communication styles.

Throughout the afternoon each young person was invited to perform some lines of their poetry to camera. We edited and subtitled these performances and have distributed DVDs so that the children can share these moments with their friends and families. The positive and thoughtful feedback collected from the young people is summarised below and shows that the day provided a tremendous and rare opportunity for the students to meet new deaf young people and to explore aspects of their identity together.

The students each gave feedback, including the following quotes: 'I thought it great learning all the



knowledge about being deaf. Also I have learned other people's expressions and feelings', 'It's really cool, learning new language from different places including Derby and Brighton, I love it!', 'It was a great experience. It's made me feel more confident'. We have been delighted to hear that some of the students are still in contact with each other via social media.

The Life & Deaf team has also worked with Eelyn Lee, a professional filmmaker. In the spring she met the Greenwich deaf students to brainstorm their ideas and to develop a script from the powerful lines of poetry submitted to the website. Over several action-packed days, in unexpected corners of Greenwich, her crew made a short film exploring the world of deaf teenagers. We have seen the first cut of this film and find it beautiful, compelling and moving.

The film, we are delighted to announce, will be launched at the Purcell Room on London's Southbank Centre on 29 March 2012. This will be a ticketed free event, primarily for the students involved, their families and professionals working with deaf children and young people. If you would like to attend or would like details of how to view the film online following the event please email us on info@lifeanddeaf.co.uk. During the evening there will also be live performances of poetry in BSL and English by both professionals and students, a visual performance piece by deaf teenagers from London and an audio poem featuring the voices of deaf children reading poetry created by children nationwide. We hope that the evening will further raise deaf awareness and that this will in turn support good mental health for future generations of deaf young people and adults.

If you are unable to attend the creative evening look out for our exhibition showcasing the film and other creative work of Life & Deaf poets. Check out our website for confirmation of venues and dates.

The Life & Deaf association is indebted to many people – the children who so honestly engage with us and each other, the professionals who guide and support them, Greenwich Sensory Service, via Greenwich Children's Services, and two private donors who provide funding and support.

Our hope for the future is that Life & Deaf will live on, through our website, currently being redesigned to make it more visual, lively and user friendly, and through the work you will all do if, like us, you are inspired to encourage deaf young people to get in touch with their true feelings through creativity and the beauty, power and freedom of language and poetry.

Helena Ballard is a Teacher of the Deaf.

Remembering Doreen

Ann Underwood pays tribute to a past President of BATOD and a tireless crusader on behalf of deaf children

Doreen Emily Woodford
1926–2011
BATOD President 1981–83

At her funeral in Much Wenlock on 19 January 2012 approximately 200 people gathered to say farewell to a 'humble adventurer' – Doreen Woodford. Her Methodist Church friends expressed their amazement at the many facets of Doreen's life that had unfolded in recent weeks. They knew her as a local preacher who had achieved the Diploma of Chaplains for the Deaf in 1982. They knew how determined she was to get her own way, and everyone that she came into contact with appreciated the 'what you see is what you get' straightforward approach that fuelled Doreen's determination to do the best she could for deaf people throughout the world.

Doreen's varied career began when she trained in childcare with Barnardo's, only turning to teaching during World War Two when many teachers were in the armed forces. After moving to Southport she came into contact with deaf people at the local Deaf Club, and because of this she decided to go into deaf education in 1944 at the Crown Street School, Liverpool (which was in evacuated premises in Southport). This was under the headship of Frank Denmark, who made her go and study under Professor Ewing at Manchester University, and in 1950 she became a certificated Teacher of the Deaf. After this, she went to teach at Margate where she achieved the Instructor's Certificate of the Royal Life Saving Society (something of which she was proud enough to share with friends at Much Wenlock!).

A gifted and dedicated teacher, Doreen was also noted for running Girl Guide groups for the deaf, encouraging in her Guides a sense of adventure and self-reliance. She regarded her time at the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate as particularly important and began to work with children with multiple disabilities. Margate also brought her into contact with deaf children in other parts of the world for the first time, and this greatly influenced her subsequent work among deaf people.

From Margate, Doreen went on to teach at the Alice Elliott School, Liverpool (1969) and the Summerfield School in Malvern (Mornington Unit) in 1975 before ending her career as an adviser for sensory deprived children at a primary school in Haringey in 1986. Doreen became the third President of BATOD in 1981, following in the footsteps of Con Powell and David Harrison in a hard-fought election.

Nowadays, when the use of sign language is so accepted in the education of deaf children, it can be hard to think back to the attitudes of the past and remember how they persisted right into the 1960s. Against this background, when Doreen was granted the Mary Grace Wilkins Travelling Scholarship, she showed boldness and commitment to her beliefs in choosing to research the place of sign language and the quality of its presentation and use in the classroom at the time. Being a person who used photography constantly in her teaching, she had plenty of experience with the camera to aid her in her research, and then, to make a better record of the signing she observed, she bought ciné equipment in order to capture it in motion – she didn't do things by halves.

In her retirement, she achieved the Postgraduate Diploma in Language in the Multi-Racial Community (March 1987) and became involved in a lot of third-world educational initiatives. Doreen followed a lifelong interest in the needs of deaf children in other countries by establishing organisations to support service provision in Africa and Asia. As one of four founder members Doreen was honoured to have the Woodford Foundation named after her. The Foundation has projects in parts of Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi – www.woodfordfoundation.org.uk/

In some ways Doreen was a very old-fashioned person with old-fashioned values and ideas, while in other ways she was right up to date and taking advantage of what the present had to offer, not to her, but to others. She was a remarkable lady – unselfish of her time, whether locally, nationally or internationally, daunting, forthright, indomitable and yet behind all that the most thoughtful and gentle person.

Many thanks to all those people who have sent me their thoughts, memories and information about Doreen Woodford. This obituary is a collation of those contributions. More complete tributes may be found on the BATOD website – www.BATOD.org.uk >> The Association >> News of members >> Obituaries submitted by colleagues.

Ann Underwood was BATOD President 2008–10.

The way we were – 50 years ago

In the latest instalment of our occasional series, Ted Moore continues his look at deaf issues in days gone by

Readers will be interested to note that in February 1962 the subscriber costs of *The Teacher of the Deaf,* the Journal of the National College of Teachers of the Deaf were 4/- (four shillings) a copy or an annual subscription of £1.0.0.

The division between teaching 'deaf' children and 'partials' was a main theme at the time.

The National College of Teachers of the Deaf (NCTD) was founded in 1918 to further the interests of deaf children and their education. At the same time it served to ensure that the profession was recognised as necessary and that ToDs were appropriately trained.

The late 1940s saw the beginnings of changes in hearing aid technology and attitudes towards disability. In 1947–48 London County Council opened four 'partially deaf units' (PDUs) and a lot of debate took place among ToDs about the efficacy of having 'partially deaf' children in the same schools and classes as the 'deaf'. By 1956 a government report indicated a change of view in regard to 'the handicapped': '…no handicapped pupils should be sent to a special school who can be satisfactorily educated in an ordinary school'. This in turn led to a proliferation of units nationally and with it the need for additional ToDs.

By the end of the 1950s some ToDs felt that their needs were not being addressed by the NCTD. They claimed that the NCTD focused all its attention on prelingually deaf children who were more or less all educated in special schools. Little, if any, emphasis was placed on the needs of other children with hearing difficulties who were being 'taught' in mainstream schools, units and hospitals. In consequence, those who felt that the needs of many deaf children were not being met or discussed formed the Society of Teachers of the Deaf (STD) in 1959.

By 1962 (50 years ago!) there were concerns about the 'split' and 'as there was a growing impression that newly qualified teachers felt that membership of the College (NCTD) or of the STD was dependent upon the type of teaching post held, it was recommended that a notice be inserted in *The Teacher* that the College would welcome members wherever they teach, and that the membership of one body did not necessarily preclude membership of the other.'

The editorial of the 1962 February issue of *The Teacher of the Deaf* stated, 'In the past we have clamoured for classification (deaf vs partially hearing); now it is nearer to realisation than it has ever been; but it must not result in the isolation of one class of teachers of the deaf from another, but rather in increased understanding and co-operation. Let us make Unity the aim of our Golden Jubilee year.'

However, it wasn't until 1976 that BATOD was formed and the two associations became one. Since then there have been further rifts within the profession, whereby BATOD was seen to only represent auditory/oral education. I like to think that this is no longer the case and that all ToDs realise that Gary Anderson's strapline 'Stronger together' is of real importance.

Ted Moore was President of BATOD 1993–95.

An advert of the time!

COME TO SUNNY SOUTH AUSTRALIA!

Townsend House Schools for Deaf and Blind Children, Brighton, near Adelaide, South Australia

Two Certificated Teachers of the Deaf required:

MALE OR FEMALE. Trained and experienced in using oral, auditory methods with primary and/or secondary pupils. Enthusiastic for language and speech teaching, and reading. Also general classroom subjects.

FEMALE PREFERABLY. Trained and experienced in using oral, auditory methods with nursery/infant pupils. Enthusiastic for language and speech teaching, and reading.

REFERENCE (a) and (b) above. Salaries – commencing day departure from UK – within range £(A)1175–£1685 (male); £(A)1003–£1437 (female). Entry scale according qualifications and experience.

Extraneous duties light. Good single accommodation available at very nominal rates. In case married male, possibility arrange in advance accommodation outside school.

Passages by sea or air prepaid by School with reasonable baggage allowance.

Attractive Government-subsidised residential and day School adjacent beach. Excellent climate. Own farm. Separate Nursery School; gymnasium, workshops, libraries, TV rooms. Modern auditory equipment including individual, group and loop induction aids; speech training units. Small classes. (Ex-Margate and Llandrindod Wells teachers on generous teaching staff).

ICT news

In nostalgic mood, Sharon Pointeer rolls back the years to 2002 when she first started writing this page and reflects on how much has, or hasn't, changed

Having been a teacher for a long time now, I am very aware of the cyclical nature of education. Initiatives come and go and then come round again, very much like buses. However, I wasn't expecting it to happen with ICT teaching. When I started teaching what in those days was called computing or computer science, I was expected to teach children to program. For their coursework projects, my first O-level group created simple computer games by writing BASIC programs. In particular I remember a sliding block puzzle, a game of hangman and an animated graphical representation of 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. I have therefore been quite amused to follow Michael Gove's announcements about the 'new computing curriculum' and his expectation for schools to teach computer science. At the BETT show Mr Gove said, 'Instead of children bored out of their minds being taught how to use *Word* or *Excel* by bored teachers, we could have 11 year olds able to write simple 2D computer animations.'

As someone who has resisted National Curriculum and other external pressures to restrict the ICT in my school to training pupils in the use of business applications which were not designed for them, I look forward to seeing what this new curriculum will look like. There goes that bus again....

On a similar theme, I realised just before Christmas that I have been writing the ICT page for the BATOD Magazine for ten years! Although the BATOD website only has archival copies going back to 2005, I have the ICT pages on my computer going back to January 2002. I thought it would be interesting to look back and see how much has changed.

My first ever offering focused on a visit to the BETT exhibition and my disappointment that the main hall was mainly taken up with huge stands for computer hardware manufacturers and sellers and that many of the smaller software houses were no longer taking stands. I was unable to attend the exhibition this year, but last year the situation was similar; no change there then! It was pleasing to read about Sherston Software, Topologika and Don Johnston products, as these companies are still going strong and their products are still excellent – www.sherston.com www.topologika.com www.donjohnston.com/

At the 2002 exhibition, I had also picked up a number of new publications by the Basic Skills Agency, which no longer exists, as it has merged with other organisations to become the Skills for Life Network. The website has information and resources related to functional skills and skills for life which are applicable to a range of learners. You can find free resources in the downloads section covering topics such as writing frames, numeracy, dyslexia and ice-breaker games. Its resource on readability is helpful and compares advice from several different agencies. It is very useful to have all of this on one sheet, particularly if you have any dually impaired pupils. The checklist also provides an easy way of assessing worksheets and resources produced 'in-house' – www.skillsforlifenetwork.com/

Later that year I was looking for resources and found the, then only, paper-based Classroom Resources material. This is another company that is still in the education market, but has moved with the times. Its resources, which have all been created by teachers, are now all available electronically. There are sample pages available for free download on its site, with materials for a huge range of subjects for primary, secondary and further and higher education. Royalties are paid to the authors, so if you have created a resource which you think other teachers would find useful you could contact the company – www.classroom-resources.co.uk/

Also in 2002 the Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy was rolled out; this included a pack with lesson planning and resources for auditing ICT in a school. The strategy was produced because of a survey which had concluded that ICT was not adequately taught in schools. The strategy indicated a clear requirement for schools to teach ICT as a discrete subject, rather than using the cross-curricular delivery, which

the Government had previously been strongly advocating. I commented that teachers were going to find it difficult to make some of the lessons from the strategy interesting and relevant for pupils. Like I said, those buses just keep circling round!

A number of the ICT pages refer to Becta advice and information. Sadly, Becta was a victim of the 2010 government cuts and was closed in March last year. Some aspects of its work have been transferred to the DfE, and the ICT Mark and the Self-Review Framework have returned to Naace. At the moment all the Becta resources are still available to download from the National Government Archives. Many of these publications will remain relevant for a long time, particularly on issues such as online safety. The easiest way to find the archived site is to use the A–Z index on the National Government Archives website, choose Becta – Schools, then click on Jan 07 2011 – www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/

Later in the year I was warning you that one in 14 laptops was being stolen. Since then this figure has grown and is now thought to be one in ten, of which only a third will be recovered. The figures for mobile phones are even higher, with as many as 10,000 being stolen in the UK each month. There is even a National Mobile Phone Crime Unit, based at the Met. iPads, iPods, tablet PCs and so on are also targets for an opportunist thief. The advice from 2002 is still appropriate:

- Security marking and Kensington locks for laptops.
- Being careful about when and where you are using these mobile devices.
- Making sure that you back up your data.
- Making sure that your device is adequately insured if you lose it or if it is stolen.

There is additional security advice on the Metropolitan Police website – www.met.police.uk/mobilephone/

Finally, in 2002, the Computers for Teachers initiative is mentioned, with teachers being offered a rebate against the purchase of a computer to use at home. Now, Mr Gove, there's an idea, how about giving every teacher an iPad to use at home and in their teaching?

Websites worth a revisit

As you would expect, some of the websites have vanished completely and others no longer contain relevant information or resources. However, here are a few which are still active and still worth a visit.

How Stuff Works – in 2002 I recommended its page on 'How PCs work'. Bearing in mind Mr Gove's announcement, perhaps everyone should be reading the information on that page. The How Stuff Works site is still actively developing ten years on. The information is now supplemented by online quizzes, podcasts, games and top ten countdowns. The main problem with the site, for our pupils, is the language level of the text, but for teachers and better readers, there is plenty of useful information on a wide variety of topics. I was rather amused by the '10 Off-the-wall iPhone Apps' and was quite taken with the sound effects app which came in at number 6 as I could think of ways of using this in listening lessons – www.howstuffworks.com/

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People – in March of 2002 Hearing Dogs unveiled a new updated image and a new logo. So what do you think it has done recently? Yes, you've guessed it, it's got an updated image and a new logo. I told you things went in cycles – www.hearingdogs.org.uk/

BMW Education – I had forgotten about this site, which contains free curricula-linked educational resources. In the learning centre there are interactive activities for primary and secondary pupils. My favourite is still 'Safe on the Street', which has been updated and improved over the years. There are resources for teachers to download, including a wet play pack containing ideas for road safety activities and photocopiable masters on the same theme – www.bmweducation.co.uk/

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities – another victim of the economic climate, this organisation closed in April last year. However, Disability Alliance has taken over some of the work, including the young people's website which has an interactive site giving options for post-16 students. The information is accessible and covers topics such as making applications, support available and useful contacts – www.skill.org.uk/

If you would like to contribute anything to these pages, please contact Sharon Pointeer at ICTNewspage@BATOD.org.uk.

Reviews

Title	**SNAP Dragons – A stories/narrative assessment procedure**
Authors	Helen Starczewski, Hazel Lloyd-Richmond
Published	2011
Available from	The Ear Foundation
Price	£10
Reviewer	Corinda M Carnelley, peripatetic ToD, London Borough of Croydon

This CD-ROM enables assessment of a child's developing awareness of books and storytelling. It assesses narrative abilities through time and also takes into account the range of communication modes a deaf child may use.

At first, this seems to be a very easy-to-use resource. The CD provides images of all of the books used and the text in different folders. The manual provides clear instructions and an explanation of why narrative is important (which I suspect we all know, but I, for one, had completely forgotten and it's good to be reminded!). The authors explain that they wanted to develop an assessment of narratives that was easy to administer, accessible, independent of communication mode, applicable to all ages and able to be used in collaborative working with a speech and language therapist. In this, they achieve their goals.

The dragon family on which the stories are based appeals to all age ranges and is culture-free.

Having looked at the books, read the introduction and smiled at the pictures, I then delved into the manual,

and this is where things seemed to get very complicated indeed. However, not being one to shirk responsibility I ploughed on….

The tester looks at the pictures with the child/pupil, using the script provided, and then asks them to retell the story. The retelling is captured on video and analysed. Needless to say, it's the analysis that is the complicated bit. The analysis is carried out at two levels:
1 Story grammar analysis – looks at how the information is organised in the narrative.
2 Semantic combinations analysis – looks at the child's use of meaning and how they combine meaning in utterances.

Because this is an Ear Foundation resource, everything is very clearly laid out; it is all there for you and easy to find – a suggestion of how long the test might take to administer; 'do' and 'don't' guidelines; various different assessment forms; instructions about how to fill in the forms and, more importantly, how to read the information they give you. There are even practical guidelines for Quick SNAP and suggested activities once you have your result.

So – yes, it's complicated, and yes, it can appear daunting, but I strongly urge you to investigate this resource because the information it offers is too important to miss out on as a Teacher of the Deaf. I suspect that it will be one of those resources where once you've got the hang of it, you wonder how you ever did your job properly without it.

This and that...

Email news to this-n-that@BATOD.org.uk

Communication report

The outgoing Communication Champion Jean Gross CBE has produced *Two Years On: final report of the Communication Champion for children*. In it she makes 30 major recommendations to the Government. They span five key themes:

- Good communication skills are central to children's learning, well-being and life chances.
- The impact of increasing cuts to frontline speech and language therapy services and specialist advisory services on which children and young people depend.
- The variability in joint commissioning of speech and language therapy services by the NHS and local authorities.
- The need for continued awareness-raising efforts and information dissemination to parents on the facts about how children's communication develops and what to do if they are worried.
- Concern around the gaps in services for school-aged children.

Jean Gross concludes in her report, 'Services for children with speech language and communication needs (SLCN) come from a low base. Reducing them further seems neither fair nor, in the longer term, effective. We also know that there are significant gains if SLCN are met in a timely manner. Not addressing SLCN stores up problems for the future. We know that there are significant long-term costs in adulthood associated with unmet speech, language and communication needs.' The report is available to download from www.thecommunicationcouncil.org and www.hello.org.uk/

Jim Hunter

It is with great regret that staff at Aberdeen Hearing Support Service wish to inform BATOD members of the sad passing of Jim Hunter on 12 January 2012. Jim was both Headteacher at Aberdeen School for the Deaf and also Head of Service in Aberdeen. He will be sadly missed by all the staff who worked with him. You will find an obituary on the website at The association >> News of members >> Obituaries.

Save the date

BATOD North Working Day: 7 November 2012 at the Deighton Centre, Huddersfield.

Abbreviations and acronyms used in this Magazine

2D/3D	Two/three dimensional
AAC	Alternative and Augmentative Communication
AAQAG	Access to Assessment and Qualifications Advisory Group
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHL	Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID)
ANSD	Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
ASL	American Sign Language
AV	Auditory Verbal (Therapy)
BASIC	Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code (computer language)
BATOD	British Association of Teachers of the Deaf
Becta	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
BETT	British Educational Training and Technology (exhibition)
BSL	British Sign Language
CACDP	Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People
CAP	Categories of Auditory Performance
CASE	Conceptually Accurate Signed English
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CD	Compact Disk
CD-ROM	Compact Disk Read-Only Memory
CELF	Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals
CI	Cochlear Implant
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRIDE	Consortium for Research in Deaf Education
CTV	Cytomegalovirus
CWB	Communication Without Boundaries
DAHISS	Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Service
DC	Diverse Communication
DCAL	Deafness, Cognition and Language (Research Centre)
DCCAP	Deaf Children's Communication Aids Provision/Project
DESF	Deaf Education Support Forum
DfE	Department for Education
DVD	Digital Versatile Disk
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EdD	Doctor of Education
ES	Early Support
EU	European Union
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FC	Flexible Communication
FLSE	Federation of Leaders in Special Education
FM	Frequency Modulation (radio)
GP	General Practitioner
IBM	International Business Machines (Corporation)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILP	Individual Learner Profile
KSL	Kenyan Sign Language
LASER	Language of Sign as an Educational Resource
L1; L2	First language; second language
MCHAS	Modernising Children's Hearing Aid Services
Naace	National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education
NatSIP	National Sensory Impairment Partnership
NCTD	National College of Teachers of the Deaf
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NDCS	National Deaf Children's Society
NEAP	Nottingham Early Assessment Package
NGT	Sign language of the Netherlands
NHSP	Newborn Hearing Screening Programme
NLVT	Non-Look Vocal Turns
O-level	Ordinary level
OCT	Ontario College of Teachers
Ofqual	Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator
PC	Personal Computer
PDU	Partially Deaf Unit
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSP	Play Station Portable
RNID	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
RSDD	Royal School for the Deaf Derby
SATs	Standard Assessment Tests
SC	Simultaneous Communication
SEE	Signed Exact English
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Sense	National charity for people with deafblindness
SIR	Speech Intelligibility Rating
SiSi	Say it Sign it
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SMS	Short Message Service
SNAP	Stories/Narratives Assessment Procedure
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
STD	Society of Teachers of the Deaf
TA	Teaching Assistant
TBA	To Be Advised
TC	Total Communication
TESSA	TExt and Sign Support Assistant
ToD	Teacher of the Deaf
UCL	University College London
UEA	University of East Anglia
UK	United Kingdom
UK HAB	UK Hearing and Balance
USA	United States of America
WWATT	Whatever Works at the Time

If you have found an acronym in the Magazine that isn't explained in this list, then use www.acronymfinder.com to help you to work it out.

BATOD membership

BATOD activities are funded from your membership fee and some advertising income. Colleagues who share your Magazine and Journal also benefit from BATOD negotiations with government and other influential bodies - but they are not contributing! Persuade your colleagues to join BATOD.

Type	Who	Benefits
Full	Those who hold a recognised qualification as a Teacher of the Deaf	5 Magazines and 4 Journals annually Access to members' area of website Discounted conference fees **Voting rights** 50% subscription for unwaged
Associate	Those other than qualified Teachers of the Deaf (includes teachers undertaking ToD training; S&LT, teachers, social workers, parents)	5 Magazines and 4 Journals annually Access to members' area of website 50% subscription for unwaged Discounted conference fees No voting rights
Special	Those working with deaf pupils in a support position eg LSAs, CSWs, TAs	5 Magazines annually Access to members' area of website Discounted conference fees No voting rights
Retired	Members who have retired from paid employment may choose this category of membership	5 Magazines and 4 Journals annually Access to members' area of website Discounted conference fees No voting rights

- Retired members who do not wish to receive the Journal should contact the Membership Secretary and arrange a reduced rate.
- Retired members who return to paid employment should inform the Membership Secretary of their changed circumstances.
- Current Full and Associate members who are entitled to a reduced subscription should notify the Membership Secretary of their circumstances by 30 June for the following year's membership, to enable the necessary paperwork to be completed.
- Members with a change in circumstance or personal details should inform the Membership Secretary as soon as possible.
- Those who live outside of the UK are eligible for overseas membership. Please contact the membership secretary for details

Membership subscription rates

due 1 August 2011

Our financial year runs from August to July. Cheque payers will be sent a reminder about payment in June. Direct debits will be altered automatically for payments in August and beyond.

	Annual Direct Debit	Quarterly Direct Debit	Cheque
Full members in employment	£ 70.00	£ 18.30	£ 75.00
Associate members in employment	£ 70.00	£ 18.30	£ 75.00
Full members taking a career break	£ 35.00	£ 9.15	£ 37.50
Associate members – unwaged	£ 35.00	£ 9.15	£ 37.50
Retired members	£ 35.00	£ 9.15	£ 37.50
Special members	£ 26.00		£ 26.00

The BATOD Treasurer may be contacted via treasurer@BATOD.org.uk

Introduce a ToD colleague and you will receive a £10.00 refund on your membership fee!
Download the form from www.BATOD.org.uk >> The Association >> BATOD membership

Meetings and training Calendar

This page is an extract from the Calendar to be found on the BATOD website. Please note that it is not exhaustive. Items noted on this Calendar may have been advertised within the Magazine or the information reported by telephone. BATOD is not necessarily the organising body.
Please contact the organising body (column 2) for details of conferences, *not* the Editor of this Magazine.

Date	Organisation	Meeting topic	Venue
March			
20	The Ear Foundation	Complex issues study week: Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
21	The Ear Foundation	Complex issues study week: CMV: Cytomegalovirus	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
21	Frank Barnes School	Creating a World Class School for the Deaf – International Developments in Design for Schools for the Deaf	ORT House, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE
22	Mary Hare Secondary School	Open Day for Professionals – secondary school	Mary Hare School, Newbury
22	The Ear Foundation	Complex issues study week: Children with Usher Syndrome	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
23	The Ear Foundation	Seminar to launch NDCS Quality Standards for Resource Bases	The Toxteth Annexe Conference Centre, Liverpool
23	The Ear Foundation	Complex issues study week: Auditory Processing Disorder	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
27	The Ear Foundation	The Latest Hearing Technologies – Research & Practice	The Resource Centre, London
28	Sense	Deafblind Practice – An International Perspective	Deafblind UK, Peterborough
28	The Ear Foundation	Deaf Children at Primary School: for Teaching Assistants	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
30	Sense	Deafblind Practice – An International Perspective	Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham
April			
10	The Ear Foundation	Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Combined Perspective	The TreeHouse School, London
21	BATOD Scotland	BATOD Scotland Committee meeting	TBA
24	BATOD South	Syndromes that challenge: Theory and practice	Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Jubilee Waterside Centre, 105 Camley Street, London N1C 4PF
24	The Ear Foundation	Children with Cochlear Implants: Progressing through the Primary Stage	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
25	The Ear Foundation	Bone Anchored Hearing Devices: Information Day for Professionals	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
27	BATOD East	Measuring Outcomes	Holiday Inn, Cambridge CB24 9PH
28	The Ear Foundation	Considering a Cochlear Implant for your Child? An Information Day for Families	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
30	The Ear Foundation	Critical Self-Review: Self-Evaluation for Schools with a Unit/Resource Base – day one of a two-day workshop	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
May			
1	The Ear Foundation	Behaviour Management: Deaf Children Under 11	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
4–5	BATOD Steering Group	Association business	Mint Hotel, Birmingham
12	BATOD Scotland	Half-day Conference	TBA
15	The Ear Foundation	Developing Thinking Skills in the Early Years	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB
18	The Ear Foundation	Assessing Functional Listening and Speech Development: Two Courses in One Day!	The Ear Foundation, Nottingham NG7 2FB

The Calendar on the BATOD website is edited as soon as we know about meetings.
Additional information about courses and registration forms may also be linked to the calendar entries.

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