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A Selection of SASL Games and Activities

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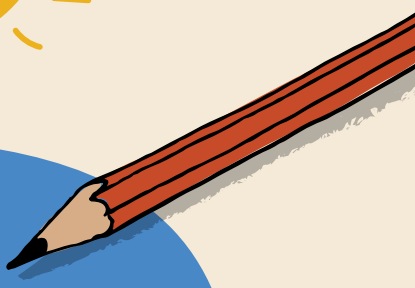
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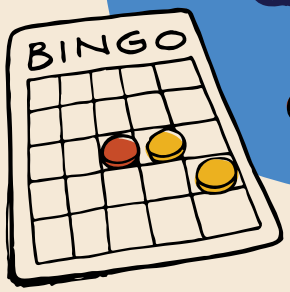


All Ages



A Selection of SASL GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Robyn Swannack





Guess what I am!





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Introduction

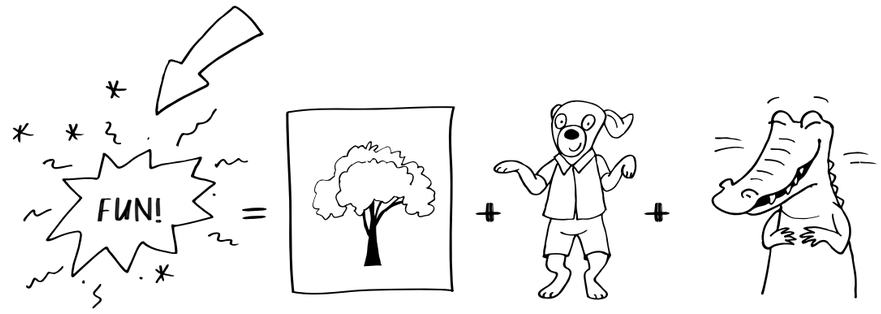
We all love having fun, no matter our age or where we come from. Think back to some of your best memories… I am sure these memories are associated with moments of happiness and laughter; you may even be smiling right now as you reminisce.

The world of research is filled with evidence of the wonderful impact that fun has on the brain and how we learn. We also know that active engagement through participation is a fundamental component of effective learning.

Now, imagine that we could take the information and subject content (the "what" of learning), add active ways for our learners to engage in the learning (the "how") and then sprinkle it with a whole lot of fun and enjoyment! One of the best ways to achieve this is by using games, fun and laughter. Imagine motivated learners skipping and smiling all the way to your class!

Games not only bring much needed enjoyment into your classroom, but the latest research also shows that fun and laughter relieve stress and tension, stimulate our organs (heart, lungs and muscles) and even improve our immune system.
I am sure you would agree with me when I say:

"I want to be a teacher like that!"



TELEPHONE LINE

The Telephone Line game is played by the Deaf community worldwide and is much loved as a fun part of Deaf Culture and Deaf humour. It is also commonly known as "Broken Telephone" or "Chinese Whispers" in the Hearing community.

This game can be used in various ways in both social fun settings as well as in classrooms as a teaching tool. Sometimes this game is also used to teach SASL to hearing people.

Number of Players
5 or more (no upper limit)

Playing the Game
- Players stand in a line at a wall, all facing the wall (this is to ensure the secret message stays a secret).
- The first person in the queue starts the "Telephone line" and taps the next person's shoulder to turn around and look at the person (while other players are still facing the wall).
- The first person signs an interesting message to the second person (it depends on the age and context).
- The second person needs to remember the message and taps the third person and shares the message… Keep doing this all along the "telephone line".
- When the message reaches the end of the line, the last player faces the whole group and signs the message to them.
- The first player then signs the original message and then everyone can see how the message changed.

Rules
- The word, phrase or sentence can be signed once only (for senior phase and FET).
- The word, phrase or sentence should not be too familiar. It should be unique.
- The players should not look at a different wall or look behind. They should look at the same wall until they get tapped on the shoulder.

Examples
Using a small story line with short sentences:
"The princess kisses a frog. The frog becomes a man. The princess and the frog-man fall in love."

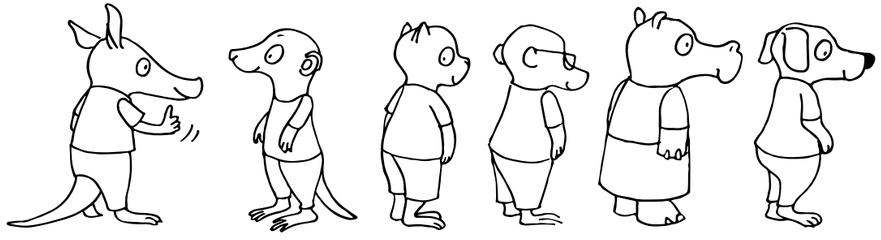
Using spatial organisation without a storyline:
The square is like this (sign a square). The circle is like this (sign the circle). The triangle is like this (sign the triangle). The shapes are different.

Using spatial organisation with a storyline:
"The girl with the big red bow on her left shoulder, walks into the class and sits in the chair at the back of the class in the right-hand corner."

Skills
- Visual memory
- Story/message memory
- Receptive signing skills (observing accuracy)
- Productive signing skills (production accuracy)

All Ages!

Additional learning
- Gossip can harm people and don't believe everything people tell you
- Be patient with others when they make mistakes
- Be forgiving
- Laugh at yourself



NMF TELEPHONE LINE

The Non-Manual Feature Telephone Line game is relatively new in the Deaf community worldwide. This game is fun to be used as an icebreaker or as a way to introduce new NMF components.

NMFs are a unique component to Deaf Culture and Sign Language Linguistics.

It can be used for all ages, but typically for younget Deaf children as they learn NMF as part of the Sign Language Curriculum.

The game can also be used in SASL class for hearing people, especially when introducing them to Sign Language linguistics and NMF as one of the linguistic parameters.

Playing the Game

- The game will require you to master facial expression skills!
- All students have to stand in a line, facing the wall (this ensures the secret facial expression message stays a secret).
- The first person in the queue (or a teacher) starts the "Non-Manual Features Telephone Line" and taps the next person's shoulder to turn around and look at the person while the other players continue facing the wall.
- The first person signs an interesting NMF message to the second person.
- The second person needs to remember the message and taps the third person and shares the message.
- Keep doing this all along the "telephone line".
- When the message reaches the end of the line, the last player faces the whole group and signs the message to them.
- The first player then signs the original message and then everyone can see how the message changed.

Rules

- The NMF should not be too simple e.g. raised eyebrows only.
- The NMF message can only be signed once.
- The players should not look at a different wall or look behind. They should look at the same wall until they get tapped on the shoulder.
- Be patient with shy learners or with hearing learners, who are typically not used to using their faces in such expressive and different ways.

Adaptation

- The NMF can also be used for older children in learning how to be 'observers' and 'communicators' using minimum tools. E.g. Communicating a sentence of meaning using only NMF.
- This can be used for older learners, and explores the power of merely using 1 linguistic feature.
- Examples:
  "The man on the right is showing off".
  "I am missing my girlfriend".

*SASL teachers can use this as a teaching opportunity to explain the NMF components.

Age

- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase
- Senior Phase

Skills

- NMF message memory
- Receptive NMF skills (observing accuracy)
- Productive NMF skills (production accuracy)

Additional learning

- There are various NMF components that can be used (not limited to facial expression only)
- Be patient with others when they make mistakes
- Be forgiving
- Laugh at yourself

ANIMAL MEMORY

This memory game can be used in various different ways and is a fun game to use as an ice-breaker or as a way to teach new vocabulary in a subject.

One of the most popular memory games is the animal memory game, but you can adapt it to colours, birds, countries, fruit, etc.

This game can be played with young and old, and adapted for the age of the players e.g. For young players any animal can be used, and for older players you can say it's only for animals that are herbivores, jungle animals, or even more difficult like animals with hooves, insects etc.

Number of Players

Ideally 8 or more. For older players, the more, the merrier.
For younger ones keep numbers below 15-20.

Playing the Game

- Everyone sits in a circle or around a table.
- The first person chooses an animal (e.g. Elephant) and signs it clearly for everyone in the circle to see. The second person then signs the first animal (Elephant) and then adds their animal they choose (e.g. Giraffe).
- The third person has to sign the first two animals (e.g. Elephant, Giraffe) and then adds their choice of animal (e.g. Rhino).
- Continue like this around the circle… It gets more fun as the list of animals gets longer… everyone laughs and maybe some get help from others.

Rules

- This memory game can be used in various different ways and is a fun game to use as an ice-breaker or as a way to teach Rules:
- Prepare ahead of time in order to be sure you have the correct Sign Language vocabulary for the words you are wanting to use (if you are a hearing teacher).
- For the younger children (in foundation phase), bring a large paper of different animals for them to recognise and choose one.
- For the older children (in intermediate phase), it is possible to remove a player from the circle if they forget more than twice, allowing the circle to get smaller and smaller, which makes it more difficult. They still have to remember each word from the original circle.
- It is important that the player who forgets is not made to feel embarrassed.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation.

Examples

The game can be used in the language class:
English: vocabulary enrichment & expansion or if you link it to "words that begin/ end with" (E- eagle or -ER player)
SASL L1: link it to linguistic features such as use of handshape (only using signs created with the "5-handshape eg. LION) or using only 2-handed signs with different handshapes eg. TORTOISE etc.

Age

- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase

Skills

- Visual memory
- Associative memory
- Learning new vocabulary

Additional learning

- Things are sometimes harder than they look
- Sometimes we can battle with something, but try again
- You can ask for help if you need it

SIGN NAME MEMORY GAME

The Sign Name Memory Game is similar to Animal Memory Game. It is a fun game to use as an ice-breaker or as a way to introduce new groups of people and children to each other. Sign names are a unique aspect in Deaf Culture, making this a very specific Deaf-Game.

This can be played with young and old, and can be adapted for the age of the players e.g. For young children, it can change the rhythm of tapping and for older children, the rhythm can be more difficult (rhythm is not just auditory in nature, it is something Deaf children can also enjoy visually and kinetically as they use and feel the clapping).

The game can be used if a new child arrives, or if two groups from different classrooms are together for the first time.

For teaching SASL to hearing people, this is also a good introduction to Deaf Culture.

Number of players

Ideally, 5 or more (for younger ones keep numbers below 15 and for older players, the more, the merrier).

Playing the Game

- Everyone sits in a circle or around a table.
- The first person starts by telling everyone his/her sign name. The second person then tell everyone their sign name. And so on. As soon as everyone knows each other's sign names, the game can begin.
- The first person has to tap their thigh, clap their hands and then sign their sign name and chooses someone else's sign name.
- The person whose sign name was chosen, has to tap their thigh, clap their hands and then sign their sign name and chooses someone else's sign name.
- Continue like this… It gets more fun the longer it goes.

Rules

- For the older children (from senior phase onwards), it is possible to kick the player out of the circle if they forget the order of the game. It is also possible to kick the player out if they take too long to choose a sign name.
  It is important that, once someone gets kicked out, the circle cannot sign that person's sign name anymore.
- It is important that the player who forgets is not made to feel embarrassed.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation
- Follow the rules

Age

- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase
- Senior Phase
- FET

Skills

- Visual memory
- Receptive signing skills (observing accuracy)
- Productive signing skills (production accuracy)

Additional learning

- Sign name is an important part of Deaf culture
- Be patient with others when they make mistakes
- Laugh at yourself

WHAT'S IN THE TROLLEY?

What's in the Trolley can be used in various different ways and is a fun game to expand and teach new vocabulary in a subject. This can be adapted to different shopping experiences e.g. food shop, clothes shopping, bakery, pet shop, hardware or art store, etc.

Number of players

Ideally 4 or more.
For a younger group, keep numbers below 8.

Playing the Game

- Everyone sits in a circle or around a table.
- The instructor start with "I am going to the _____shop and I put _____ in the trolley".
- The player on the right (second player) has to add a new item to the trolley, but first needs to mention everything, e.g. "Item 1. I am going to the _____shop and I put _____ in the trolley".
- The third player adds a new item in the trolley, but needs to first add what has already been said before: "Item 1. Item 2. I am going to the _____shop and I put _____ in the trolley".
- Keep going around for as long as possible, always starting from the first item and then adding your new item at the end.

Adaptations

- Alphabet Shopping
  First player: "I add apples to the trolley". Second player: "Apples. I add apricots to the trolley". Third player: "Apples. Apricots. I add Avocado to the trolley".
- Fruit Shopping
  First player: "I add apples to the trolley". Second player: "Apples. I add blueberries". Third player: "Apples. Blueberries. I add carrots to the trolley," and so on.

For Foundation Phase children, each child can put something in the trolley, but doesn't have to remember what their friend put in.

Rules

- Prepare ahead of time in order to be sure you have the vocabulary list for the younger groups.
- It is important that the player who forgets is not made to feel embarrassed. The instructor can write down the words on the board to make it easier for the younger groups to follow.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation.
- Follow the rules.

Age

- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase

Skills

- Vocabulary development
- Visual memory
- Short term memory
- Receptive signing skills (observing accuracy)
- Productive signing skills (production accuracy)
- Turn taking

ONE-WORD CHARADES

One-word Charades is commonly played in the hearing community but beware, Deaf people are very good at the game, especially at guessing the answer.

Number of players
Big groups are fun.

Playing the Game
- Get the word. For young learners the players get the sign from the teacher. Older learners can read the English word. For hearing people learning SASL, this game can be very educational.
- Stand in front of the group and act out the word (you can't use your mouth or any Sign Language).
- Whoever guesses correctly is the next to go and get the word.

Rules
- This is Charades, and this means you are not allowed to sign the word.
- You have to act-out what the word is and the audience have to guess the word!
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation.

Skills
- NMF skills
- Associative memory
- Learning new NMF components
- Productive NMF skills (production accuracy)
- Receptive NMF skills (observing accuracy)

All Ages!

Additional learning
- Expressive skills
- Observation skills
- Team work



WHO AM I?

Who am I game can be used in various different ways and is a fun game to use when introducing a new topic in a subject, a new character in a book or as a revision of characters or people in history or animals etc. or as a way to teach new places, people and objects.

You can adapt the game to:
- What animal am I?
- What place am I?
- Which famous Deaf person am I?
- What object am I?
- What food am I?
- What insect am I?

Number of players
Ideally 4 or more

Playing the Game
- Split the children into two groups. Have a timer ready!
- The first group has to nominate a player. The player picks a paper from the bowl.
- Start describing the word for 1 minute (you cannot say the word itself)
- The players from the first group has to guess the word. If they guessed the word correctly, they get a point.
- The second group has to nominate a player. The player picks a paper from the bowl.
- The players from the second team has to guess the word for 1 minute. If they guessed the word correctly, they get a point!

Rules
- The players cannot describe the word using the word itself. They have to avoid using the word but have to find a way to describe the word.
- The players can use props if teacher allows.
- It is important that the player who struggles to describe the word is not made to feel embarrassed.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation.
- Follow the rules.

Age
- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase
- Senior Phase
- FET

Skills
- NMF skills
- Associative memory
- Learning new NMF components
- Productive NMF skills (production accuracy)
- Receptive NMF skills (observing accuracy)



HOT VS COLD!

Hot vs Cold is popular worldwide, and is an adaptation of the hearing community's game. Requiring one's best detective skills, the game can be adapted for young and old by varying the difficulty of locations and complicated NMF.

Number of players
Ideally 5 or more

Instructions
- Everyone sits in their assigned tables. The teacher or the players has to choose an object that they will hide. It can be a ruler, or a book, or a fluffy ball.
- The teacher has to choose one player (or they can volunteer) to close their eyes or stand outside the room. The player must not peek in the classroom!
- The classroom hides the object in the cleverest way (under the chair, behind the curtain, behind the bookshelf, or in the teacher's table drawer.
- When the object is hidden, the teacher has to call the player out.
- The player has to start looking for the object. If the player is farthest from the object, the classroom has to show NMF associated with 'cold'.
- If the player is nearest the object, the classroom has to show NMF associated with 'hot'.
- When the player is so close to the object, the classroom has to show NMF associated with 'really hot'.
- When the player finds the object, it is his/her turn to choose another player to close their eyes.

Rules
- The players cannot point where the object is or use sign language to describe its location.
- For the younger children, find an object that is fun and exciting for them.
- This game can be used at year-end events. Teachers can hide chocolates or sweets and when the player finds them, they can eat it.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the situation.
- Follow the rules.

Age
- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase
- Senior Phase
- FET

Skills
- NMF skills.
- Associative memory.
- Learning new NMF components.
- Productive NMF skills (production accuracy).
- Receptive NMF skills (observing accuracy).

Additional learning
- Be patient with others if they take too long to find the object
- Be forgiving
- Laugh at yourself



BINGO!

Bingo is a popular game. It can be used in various different ways and is a fun game to use as a way to teach new vocabulary in a subject.
This can be played with young and old, however Bingo in Sign Language is best with younger children.

This game can be adapted by age or subject: e.g. Subjects: LO - Hygiene words; Science: things that are alive/dead; Language: Finding adjectives/adverbs for both English or Sign Language, identify the nouns, verbs, poems etc.
Themes: Finding "colour words" in a story, True or False, Deaf Culture.
Sign Language Linguistics: Handshapes (find the words signed with the B-handshape in the story), NMF (find the Y/N question etc.).

The game can follow a story, a set of answers to questions the teacher asks, or even identifying the alphabet (handshapes) is a story being told (?)

The instructor has to sign a story: "YESTERDAY, I ate two bars of CHOCOLATE. I felt so sick afterwards. I ran to the TOILET. It was terrible!"

The students should fill in 3 spots with the story above on their Bingo sheets.

Number of players
Ideally 5 or more

Instructions
- The instructor gives a Bingo sheet to each learner. Allow the learners to look at their sheet and see what is there.
- Each table/learner gets beans/small pieces of paper to cover the Bingo squares.
- The teacher begins signing one of the stories (see an example above).
- The learners have to watch the story and fill in their sheet if the vocabulary was used in the story.
- The game ends when the first learner has filled out all spots on the Bingo sheet. The learner stands up and fingerspells B-I-N-G-O.

Rules
- Prepare ahead of time in order to make sure you have the correct story with the correct Bingo sheets.
- Prepare signing the story a few times (if you are a hearing teacher), to make sure you sign fluently.
- Learners should not have the same Bingo sheets, each Bingo sheet needs to be a different group of words.

Age
- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase

Skills
- Concentration
- Short term memory
- Following specific instructions

CATCH-AND-THROW STORIES

Catch-and-Throw Stories can be played inside or outside. It is a fun way to encourage students to create interesting stories and use descriptive language. You can use it in both the SASL and English class as well as other subjects . eg. LO (what do you need to do to stay safe during Covid?… wash hands, wear mask… stay far away, etc.).

This game can be adapted for the age of players. For young players, use short stories or descriptions: *e.g. The man is: old, tall, grey, funny. The dog runs: fast, far, over the bridge, away from cat etc… because he is scared/happy etc.*

For the older group, this game can be played with more interesting and complex story lines and descriptions (using synonyms/antonyms/adverbs/adjectives).

Number of players
Ideally 4 or more

Playing the Game
- Everyone sits/stands in a circle. Have a ball ready (it can be a tennis ball or a soccer ball). For small children use a bigger ball due to gross motor development coming first.
- The teacher starts the story very basically (e.g. "Yesterday, we went to…") and throws the ball to the first player.
- The first player holds the ball. He/she adds to the story e.g. "Yesterday we went to… a doctor…".
- The first player chooses a person and throws the ball to them. The second person catches the ball and then continues the story e.g. "Yesterday, we went to a doctor… because we felt…".
- The second player now throws the ball to a third person and so on.
- Continue like this around the circle. It gets more fun as the sentence gets longer.
- If the story gets stuck or goes to a 'dead-end' the teachers asks the child to throw her the ball and the teacher adds something interesting to get the story going again.

Rules
- The teacher has to prepare ahead of time if they want the players to use a specific list of vocabularies or follow a specific storyline, e.g. Today we are going to talk about journeys, or operations, or a special event like a birthday.
- The players cannot throw the ball at the child, but need to wait until the child is ready and then throw it to the child so that they can catch it.
- If a player cannot catch a ball, or throws it badly, please don't laugh at them or make them feel embarrassed.
- Don't laugh at a person, laugh at the story.
- Follow the rules.

Age
- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase
- Senior Phase
- FET

Skills
- Language extension
- Learning new vocabulary
- Creativity
- Storytelling/story line/narrative

Other skills
- Ball catching and throwing

NEEDLE AND THREAD

Needle and Thread is a fun game to use body movements in different ways and for teachers to observe learner posture and body control.

Visual-Spatial games of this nature are very specific to Deaf Culture, as accurate movements of the body as a core part of signing correctly.

This can be played with any age, but especially with younger children. This can also be played with hearing learners of SASL, as they often struggle particularly with facial movements and specific muscle control.

Number of players

Ideally 4 or more

Playing the Game

- Everyone is standing in a row facing the front. Each child gets a turn to go to the front of the class.
- The teacher Mimes hands the "needle and thread" to the first player and they then stand in front of the class.
- The player chooses a body part. For smaller children -arms, hands, legs, and feet. For older children, parts of the face.
- The player mimes that they are threading the needle e.g. through the the right wrist, one or two shoulders, left cheek.
- The player now mimes pulling the thread up and down… which should make the wrist or cheek move up and down.
- The rest of the children now copy the same movements, as the player pulls the thread in different directions.
- Each child only gets to choose one body part. Then they call a new child and mime 'handing over the needle and thread'.

Rules

- It is important that the player who cannot move as they need to should not be made to feel embarrassed.
- Follow the rules of politeness, patience and kindness.

Age

- Foundation Phase
- Intermediate Phase

Skills

- Theory of mind
- Muscular control
- Spatial awareness
- Observation accuracy
- Concentration skills
- Following specific instructions