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Teacher's guide to growing languages and literacy

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Theory of Mind

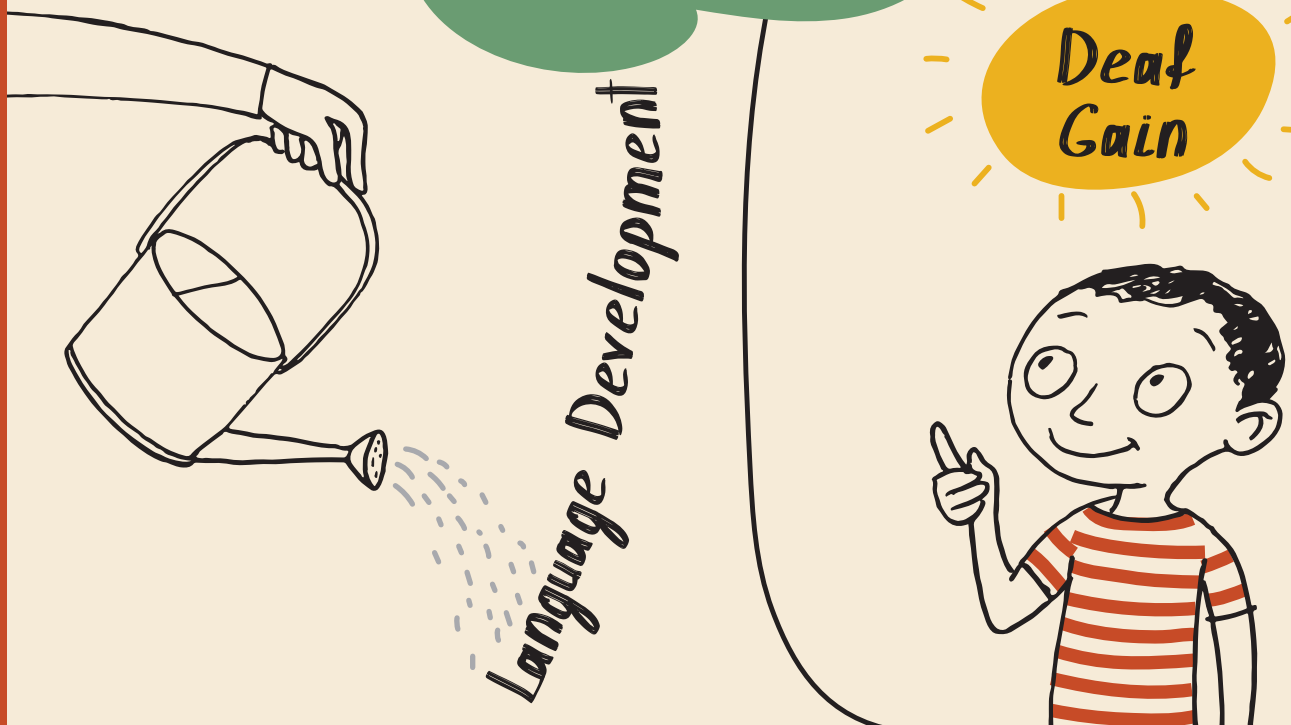
Maximise Moments

A Teacher's Guide to Growing LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Claudine Storbeck

Deaf Gain

Language Development



SOUTH AFRICA 2018

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This publication has been developed by the Wits Centre for Deaf Studies through the Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme, which is being implemented through a partnership between The Department of Higher Education and Training and the European Union.

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the centre for DEAF STUDIES 20th Anniversary

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Introduction

Welcome to our Teacher's guide to growing **Language and Literacy**, especially created for Teachers of the Deaf.

You may be thinking that this book is not for you, because you are neither an English teacher nor a literacy expert! In fact, whether you teach Maths, History, Life Orientation, Art or Science, language is an integral part of the teaching and the learning process, so...



Even if you're not an English teacher, this book is definitely for you!

We hope to share with you both new and old information in a way that inspires you to learn more, be more and grow more as a teacher and as a learner. We love deaf and hard of hearing children and because it is our dream for every one of our children to fall in love with books and become readers, we want you to catch this passion too.

You will notice that we have left some space for you to make notes and keep track of new insights, as well as ideas that you think of while reading this book. We know that as you read, it will spark your own thinking in the form of questions, creative and imaginative ideas, frustrations or even just confirmations on key facts and learnings. Being an active reader and engaging with the text - whether you underline words, circle or squiggle them or even highlight them - these are all strategies to keep you focused and active.

Personal Reflections

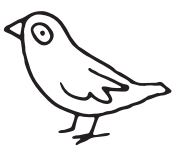
What was your favourite book as a child? (magazine or comic)

What do you love/ hate about books and reading?

What do you know confidently about reading & literacy?

What are your questions about how reading links to your subjects?

I wish I knew...



Before we pick up that book...

Literacy is everywhere and every one of us knows a baby, a child or teenager in our lives that needs to be introduced them to the wonderful world of books and literacy. It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from, it doesn't even matter if we didn't have a good start in life as readers ourselves. What does matter is that we can all learn to become reading partners and models for our children and the first step is to show love and enthusiasm for books.

So, how do children actually learn to read?

Literacy and the journey to becoming a reader starts at birth, with each little opportunity for exposure forming the stepping-stones on which the rest of this path toward literacy is built. IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO BEGIN TO READ to your child nor is it ever too late! Just get started, because it's so much easier than you think.



Many books have been written about how to teach reading and the different types of literacy teaching entailed. See end page for some excellent resources.

There have been thousands of books written on how children learn to read and yet most researchers and teachers will agree that the pathway to reading is still mostly a mystery. There are various models and methods of teaching reading, from phonics to whole word and vocabulary learning, yet there is no 'one way' that is the answer. In this book we want you to think beyond models and recipes and start at the love of literacy.

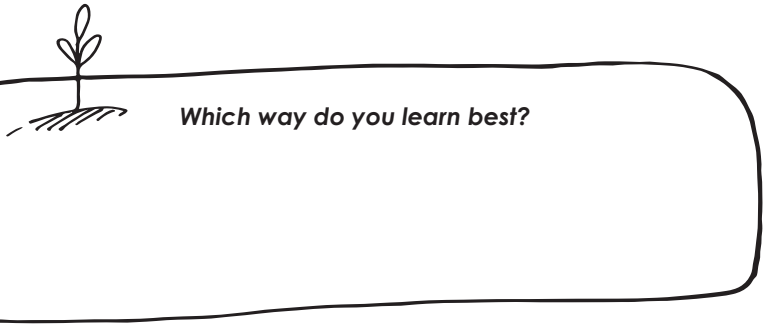
Most teachers would agree that there are top down ways of learning to read and bottom up ways of learning to read … where in the bottom up way children sound words out letter by letter and in the top down way learners seem more able to learn whole words. There is also a belief that it's a combination of the two should be used, while some teachers believe it's a 'whole language/ big picture' strategy with whatever works for the individual learners.

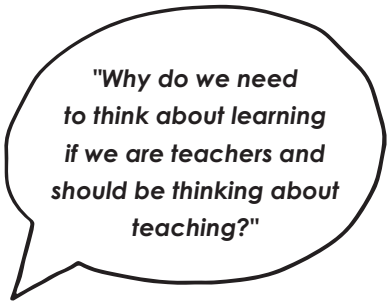
If we think about learning more broadly, there are a few different learning styles:

- Some of us learn from being taught in the traditional stand-in-front-of-the-class-and-teach style. This is referred to as the 'auditory' learning style, but in schools for the Deaf it could be 'visual listening', because this is the style of learning where the learner can just sit and **listen** to the teacher and they typically remember what is taught;

- Some of us **learn visually** and this does not refer to sign language, but rather a learning style that learns best through visual examples such as posters, pictures, videos and graphs.

- Some of us learn best **through doing and being active** while we learn and this can include making notes, wanting to draw (or take photos) of what you see or practicing and doing what is being learned. This active learning style (referred to as the kinesthetic learning style) can also been seen in learners who need to doodle when they are learning.





It is important to know that the large majority of us use a combination of learning styles and sometimes we even use different learning styles in different contexts.

"In order for us to teach well, we need to know how our learners learn best."





Look at the back of the book for exciting ideas & examples that you can use and adapt.

So, now that we have thought about how our learners learn… how do children actually learn to read?

Despite all we know about reading and learning and teaching, children don't learn to read as much as they become readers. Doesn't that just give you huge a sense of relief …. phew, we don't need to teach our kids to read as much as we need to provide them with the basic building blocks they need. One of the most important building blocks is providing them with wonderful literacy experiences, and this is what we will begin to explore in this book.

Despite all we know about reading and learning and teaching, children don't learn to read as much as they become readers. Doesn't that just give you huge a sense of relief …. phew, we don't need to teach our kids to read as much as we need to provide them with the basic building blocks they need. One of the most important building blocks is providing them with wonderful literacy experiences, and this is what we will begin to explore in this book.

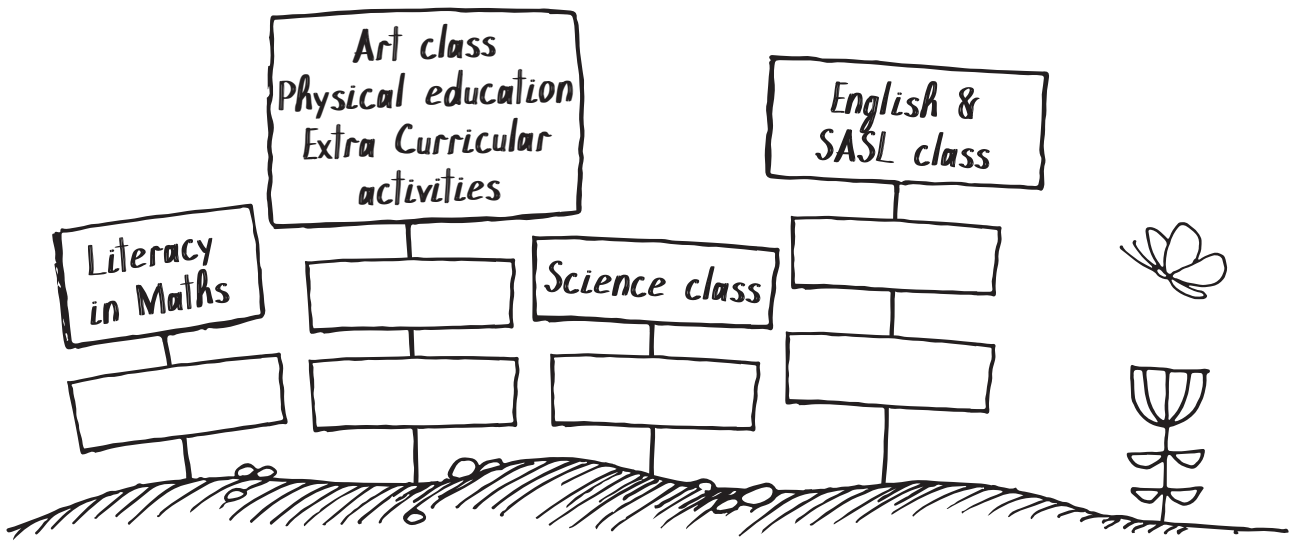
What is a literacy rich environment and what on earth is a literacy rich experience?

No matter what your class looks like or what type of home you live in, a literacy rich environment is one where children see print – whether they are books or magazines (bought at a shop or homemade, whether they are shiny and new or old and tatty), newspapers, adverts from a local supermarket or even letters and birthday cards. We can be resourceful and creative and even use empty cereal boxes, tins of food or chocolate wrappers … literacy is all around us.

But, it is not enough to have these in your class, children need to see you enjoying reading! This means they need to see you having fun with reading. Whether you are reading a book, a what's app from a friend, a letter from the school principal, an article in the newspaper, instructions on how to make something or even the words on a meme. Invite and encourage your learners and children to come and sit with you and read, or participate in looking at post, news articles, websites or even writing a to do list.

Let me share a secret with you … one of the keys to success in your learner becoming a readers is YOU! Children need fun learning experiences with you as a teacher and with their fellow classmates – whether its serious facts or fun activities – it is our role as teachers to make teaching and learning interesting and stimulating whilst they learn the power of reading in almost all aspects of their lives.

What are some fun ways of introducing literacy into the classroom?



Here's another secret: it's not always about having a book in your hand, it's also about building general knowledge and interesting communication. To do this you don't need expensive teaching tools or resources, you don't need technology or a range of expensive toys or books in your class … it just means having captivating and rich conversations with your learners. Whichever language policy your school follows, it's about fully accessible language in your class both expressively (what you communicate) and receptively (what learners communicate to you) in whatever subject you teach.

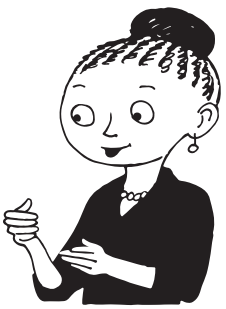
So if creating this rich language environments is important, how do we do it and where do we start … well, lets get back to basics. It all starts with the 3 components of communication: the Messenger, the Message and the Receiver.



The receiver (learner)

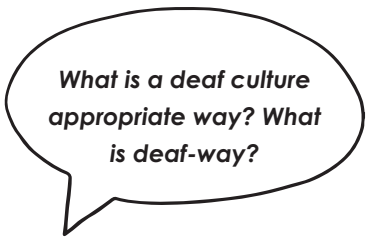


The message



The messenger (teacher)

Let's consider some of these questions



If you are Teaching in the class you are the Messenger:

- ***How do you know if you are communicating effectively with your learners?***
- ***How do you know if they are 'really' understanding you?***

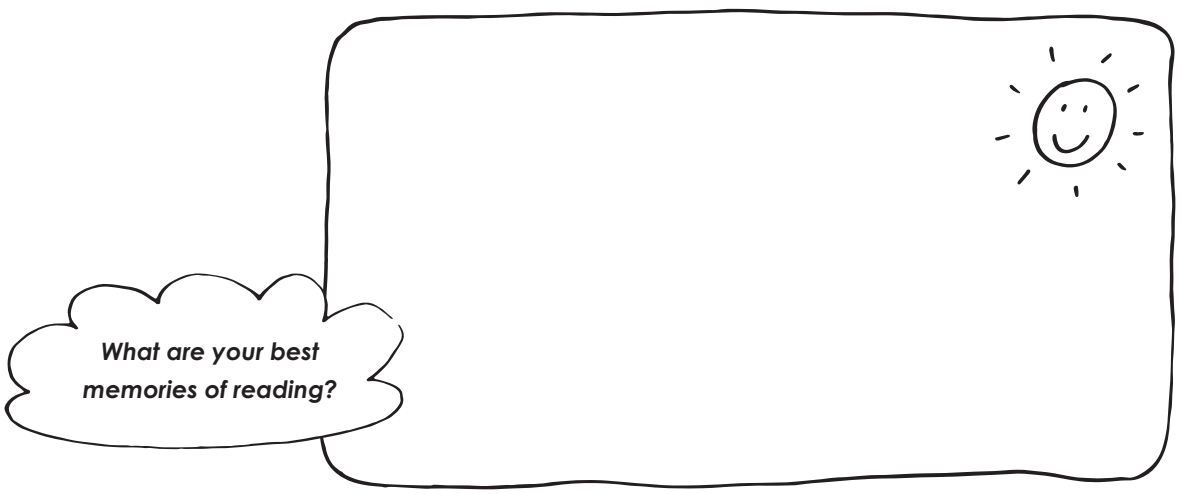
This process of 'on-your-feet' self-assessment, monitoring and adjusting is an essential part of teaching!
If the learner is talking to you or asking you a question, you are the Receiver:

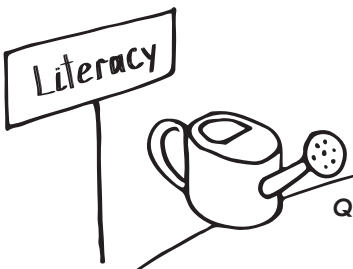
- ***How well do you understand your learners? Not just the basic message, but the rich and intricate message they are sharing with you.***
- ***How do you even assess how well you are understanding your learners?***

What you are teaching or discussing is The Message:

- ***How interesting is it?***
- ***Are you presenting the message with rich and expressive language, varied vocabulary?***
- ***Is your 'pedagogy' effective, which needs thinking about if you are aiming it at the right level in the most culturally appropriate way?***

A third and probably one of the best kept secrets – it seems almost too obvious – is that the more we do things the better we do things! Whether you are playing a sport (kicking a soccer goal / doing a cartwheel), learning a new hobby or skill (skipping, drawing or sewing) or learning to read … practice makes perfect. The more children read the better they will read. However, if reading is a challenge it's the last thing your children will want to do and so the opposite is also true, the less they read the less chances they will have to practice and ever become good at it. So, if we make reading fun and a wonderful and interesting experience, our learners will want to read, and so the positive cycle continues!





Great ideas:



Questions I still have:

New learnings:

Notes:



Now let's get that book in our hands!

Pedagogy/ How we teach

Where do we start? (pre-reading)
One of the best ways to start is by opening a book at a really interesting page and just spending time looking at the picture and talking about it, exploring what you see and think is happening, but more importantly, it's about setting the stage and foundations for the reading that is going to happen. Be observant as a teacher, notice what the learners are looking at, what they are curious about, what their general knowledge is about the topic and the vocabulary they have.

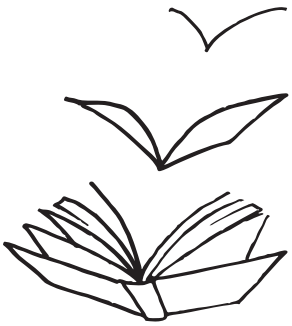
The fact that we as teachers and parents need to be masterful observers is an understatement. Our skills as observers really need to become our 'secret weapon', the thing that should amaze our kids each time we say something that makes them think "how did she know I was wondering about that" or "how did she know I didn't understand that".



Different ways of using books

Book sharing
Exploring pictures together can be a lot of fun, but more than that it can also be a huge opportunity to have interesting conversations, and this is what we call **book sharing**. This is a wonderful way to start introducing books to little ones, from as early as possible. For tiny ones this could mean maybe only a minute or two while you lie on the carpet together and you have their attention naturally. This time will extend as children grow older and as they fall in love more and more

with books, so use every little opportunity to 'grab their attention". It is also wonderful if you can get your child actively involved in the process: ask questions (I wonder why she is laughing?), point with big eyes/ show surprise (What do you think that is?) or even asking her to 'read it' to you. Don't be shy, use your face, your voice, your eyes and hands … **it's all about having fun together with text**. A lot of the time, we are quiet and giving the child space to enjoy and study every little detail of the book … this is not time to catch up on a text message or go and do some admin work, this is the start of literacy development and you need to be right there with the children.



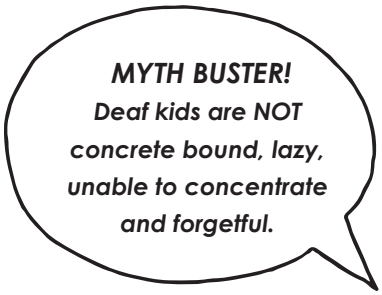
Storytelling

Telling the story is another fun way to share the book with your learners, a fun end-of-day story, letting them tell you the story, discussing possible different endings to the story or even **'acting out'** the story.

"Lets pretend we are the kittens trying to catch the mouse ….ooooh here comes a puppy, lets hide in the tree. I'm feeling scared."

Whatever subject you teach, have your reading corner include resources specifically related to your content.

The strength of these few techniques lie in the fact that story telling is a particular strength of South African Culture and that role play and drama are techniques used in early childhood learning experiences, due to them being both age appropriate, language extending and imagination enhancing. **This is only literacy IF the book is nearby** and the learners know you are telling them a story from that book, which they will later be looking at, reading or being read to.



Reading the Story

And then of course **reading the story**, where the child gets to hold touch and feel the book… smell its wonderful pages and see and feel the words on the page. We can sometimes read to the class (and this is not only for young ones) and if they are old enough they also need to experience reading it themselves. If at all possible, have a wonderful reading corner or area that celebrates reading … where learners can go and escape into the world of books. Make is special, make it manageable, scaffold and support where possible and reward and celebrate reading (even if they only read a little), and never give reading as punishment!

Now that we have discussed some of the basics and foundations of literacy, let's start this exciting journey into the world of Literacy in the classroom and its value in education and beyond.

Literacy starts with rich language



Language is power and limited vocabulary leads to limited language, and this leads to limited expressions and the power to manage situations in their lives. It is within our hands as teachers to make rich and expressive language available to each and every one of our learners, whether they are hearing, deaf or hard of hearing.

Let us enrich and equip our learners with strong language foundations

- Always try and **use rich vocabulary** when you teach (and that will mean you that need to expand your own vocabulary as a teacher AND learn the signs for these words too!).

As we aim to expand vocabulary and build expressive and rich language , why don't you model for your learners how to find synonyms in a thesaurus. Let's look at some basic sentences and see if we can find alternative words for good and cross:

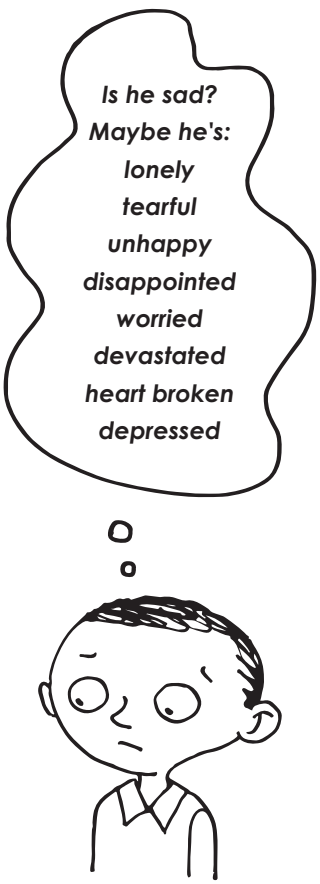
1. Thandi wrote good story for homework.
2. Paul was feeling cross because he lost his pen.

good > interesting, excellent, impressive, marvelous
cross > disappointed, frustrated, upset

- Never underestimate a child, no matter their hearing level or age.

- **Model for our learners how to describe things** in a richer way and sometimes even in a more accurate way for example: when a learner enters your class looking unhappy, we would typically say "you look sad" or if we ask what's wrong, maybe the learner only knows the emotion "sad". Here it is more than just expanding vocabulary, it's about helping our learners truly understand what they are feeling beyond their limited vocabulary.

- **Expanding vocabulary:** The learner may say she is sad, but maybe there is a deeper emotion or a different emotion and for this it always helps to ask "**tell me more**." Make time to connect with your learner and be really interested. Sometimes our learners (especially when they are younger) can't explain how they feel and we could help them by asking some questions gently for example: Are you feeling sad like you want to cry or sad like you are feeling scared? Or are you feeling sad because you are missing your friend etc. Once the learner has explained what has happened and how she is feeling, we can give them the right word for the feeling.



Can you find synonyms for these words:

fast

slow

lonely

scared

big

small

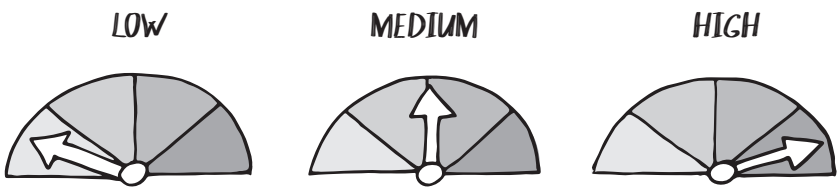
excited

- Another important part of language enrichment is to help our learners develop language for the **intensity of experiences and emotions.** Let us use the same example of "sad". The learner may respond to you by saying they are feeling a little sad, very sad or very, very sad. Often this is not enough. Let's use this opportunity to help the learner label their feelings by intensity.

The Feeling Thermometer

One of the most helpful tools we have found, even with the young learners, is to describe their feeling on the feeling 'thermometer'.

Let's see how we can use the feeling thermometer. The child is looking sad but may feel different things. Try to plot the feeling words on the intensity level.



example: unhappy > sad > devastated
happy > thrilled > ecstatic

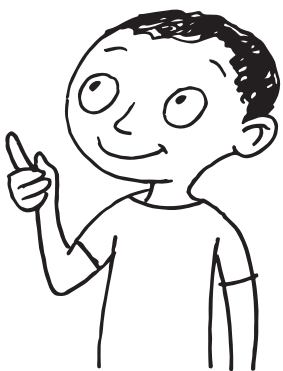
This language enrichment is for both the learner's SASL and English, and in terms of Sign Language, the visual and kinesthetic experience of describing the feeling on the thermometer is very helpful for the Deaf learner... reminder: NMF in SL play an essential role in describing intensity of feeling.

- **Provide/ ensure access**. One of the key challenges for a child growing up with hearing loss of any level, is the lack of or limited access to *incidental learning*. This means that they don't just overhear the things that people talk about or what is said over the radio or TV. Think back to how you learned about money (the value of money and cost of living, impact of prices going up) or daily news (natural disasters, sports or political development), family arguments and how negotiations help resolve these. The value of incidental learning is totally underestimated and one of the reasons Deaf children often have such a significantly limited general knowledge. Because this leads to a huge gap in the foundations of their language and therefor their learning, we as teachers and parents need to fill in the gaps and even pro-actively prevent these gaps from appearing by discussing news and events often.



- One of the most powerful tools we can use to ensure these gaps don't form is by **narrating the day**, which means that we talk about what we do, what we feel and what we think, for example sharing the interesting story you heard on the news about the whales or about the fact that you left your lunch at home and that you feel frustrated and of course very hungry at work today. Another example would be to *think out loud* as you plan an activity eg. painting the book-shelf, as hearing children definitely overhear their parents talking to themselves, for example:

  "hhmm I think we need to go and fetch the paint and newspaper… (walks out and comes back in)… *Oooh these tins of paint are huge, phew they are very heavy. My hands are aching. Okay now lets spread out the newspaper all along the floor – can you help me please?"*



When you consciously do this , your child will have access to so much more, including new vocabulary, planning and sequencing, new ways of phrasing things and generally new learning. This is also the time to monitor the importance of reading instructions on how to do things - eg. stir the paint or never stir the paint, whether it's poisonous, or even if it can wash out or stain your clothes.

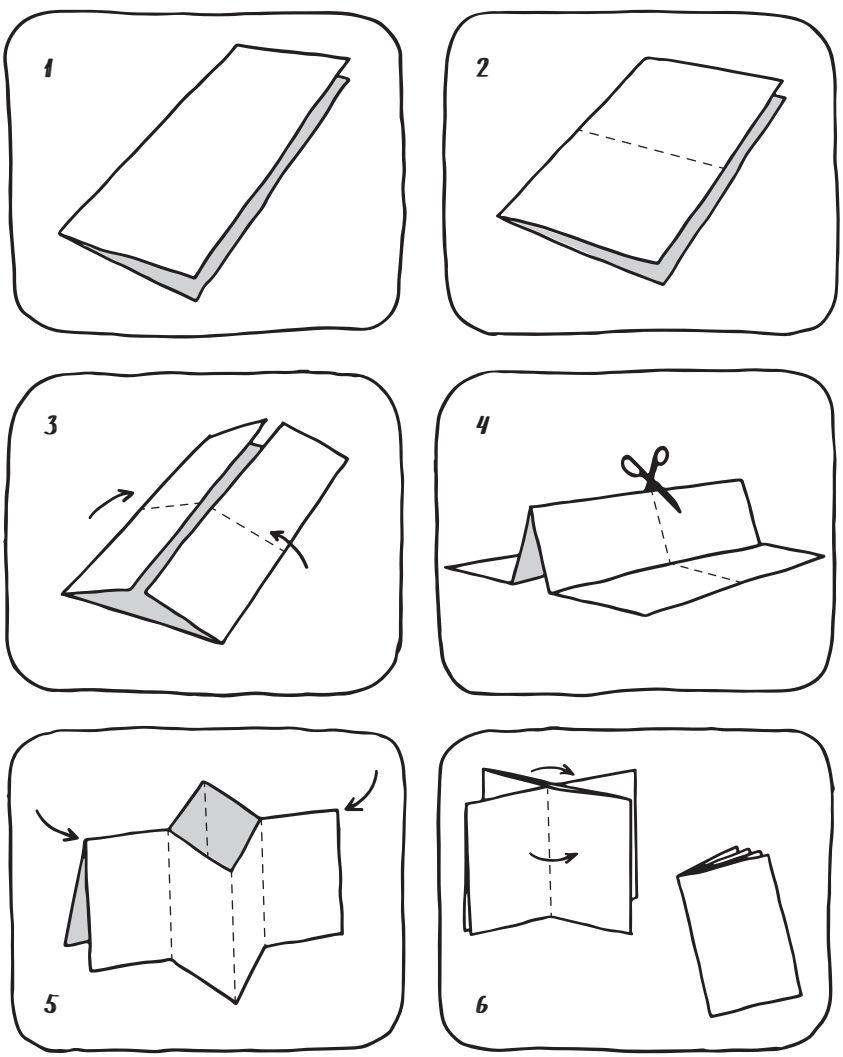
In closing, we want to again emphasize that the importance of reading can never be underestimated. Reading is power and gives our children the strong foundation they need as they step out into the world.



Book-making

For students who don't have access to books, here are some quick and easy ways to make books. Provide age appropriate supplies to glue, draw, cut and bind.

• Make a mini booklet from a single sheet of A4 paper.



METHOD:

1. Fold an A4 sheet of paper lengthwise.

2. Unfold, then fold it in half widthwise.

3. Unfold, then fold the edges up to the centre.

4. Unfold, then fold widthwise and cut a slit halfway down the centre.

5. Unfold, then fold widthwise and push the ends in towards the centre.

6. Fold all the pages together into a mini booklet.



- Sew or staple plain pages together to draw, write story or stick pictures on.

- Cut out pictures and words from magazines. Words can be used to make sentences related to the images.

- Cut up cereal boxes and decorate the unprinted side to use as book covers.

Use the environment around you

There are examples of Literacy everywhere, we don't need a lot of money and shouldn't make learners and parents feel inferior or guilty for not being able to afford books. Look around you … **Literacy is everywhere!** We just need to help our learners see the exciting and powerful world of literacy all around



- **Logos** are often a first step into literacy for children that are too young to read … they recognize these logos long before they even know that letters make words. We can start making them aware of for example the big yellow 'm' in the McDonald's logo when the time is right, and to remember that our role is to ensure rich literacy environments in fun and interesting ways. Other logos that are identified early include Chicken Licken, Coke, Burger King, White Star Maize Meal and Kellogg's cornflakes for example. It is interesting to note that we don't have to teach kids these logos, they just learn them from every day meaningful exposure.

- At a personal level, children usually start recognizing the first letter of their **name** as they start on their literacy journey.

Let's look more specifically at where else we see literacy in everyday life… we have given you some ideas and left a space for you to add some of your own.



HOME

- ***Newspapers***
- ***Letters and Post***
- ***WhatsApp/SMS***
- ***TV schedules***
- ***Food labels***
- ***Recipes***

CELEBRATIONS

- ***Birthday and Christmas cards***
- ***WhatsApp messages***
- ***Messages on banners and balloons***
- ***Song words***

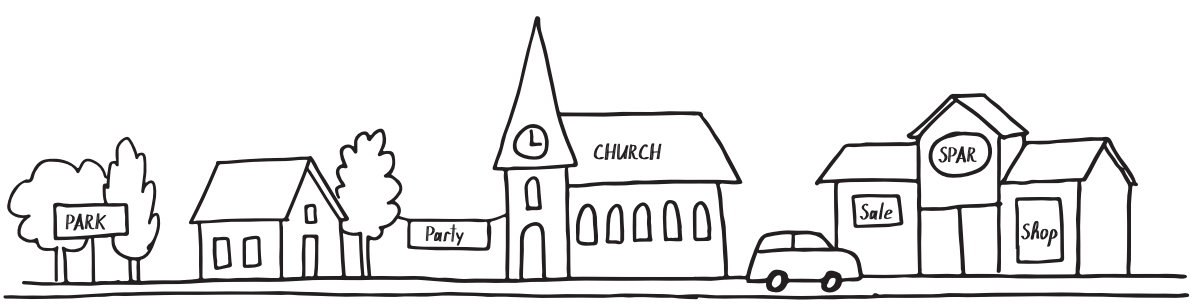
SHOPS

- ***Food packaging***
- ***Shopping lists***
- ***Prices on shelves***
- ***Shop signs***
- ***Till slips***
- ***Shop adverts***
- ***Road signs***

OUT & ABOUT

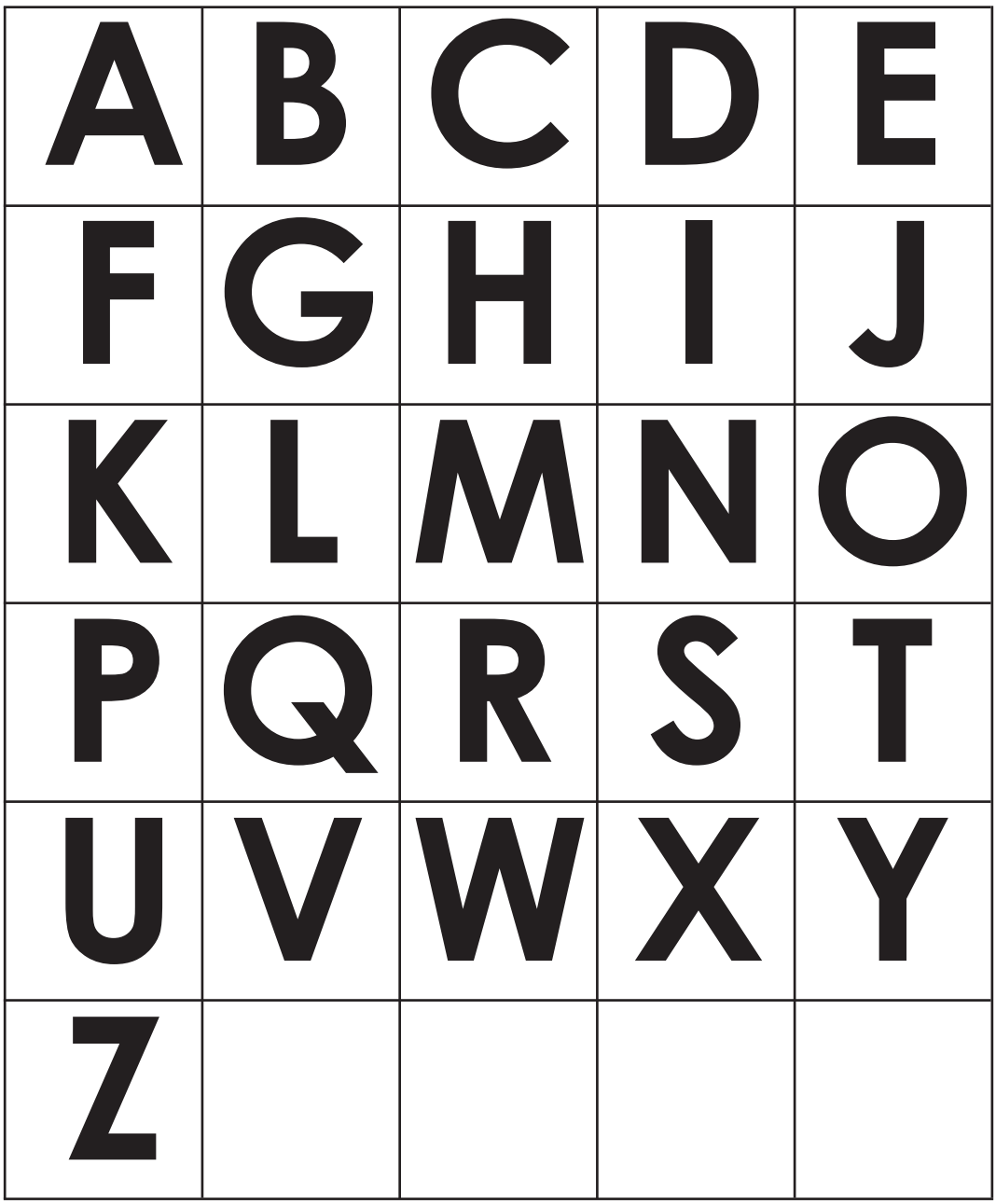
- ***Road signs***
- ***Road names***
- ***Maps & directions***
- ***Movie adverts***
- ***Church signs and songs***

OTHER IDEAS:



The following pages are provided for you to photocopy and use in your classroom.

		a	b	c
d	e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l	m
n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w
x	y	z		


A B C D E
F G H I J
K L M N O
P Q R S T
U V W X Y
Z

 a	 b	 c	 d	 e
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6	7	8	9	0
 1	 2	 3	 4	 5
 6	 7	 8	 9	 0

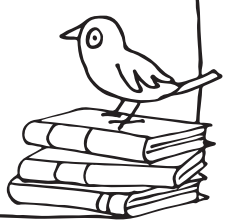
Inspirational quotes

Copy and cut out these quotes to keep the importance of literacy visible all the time. You could stick them on your wall or mirror or use them for students as bookmarks.

There are perhaps no days of our childhood lived so fully as those we spent with a favourite book.

Marcel Proust

The man that does not read good books has no advantage over the man that cannot read.



The book you don't READ won't help YOU.

A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading.

William Styron



Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.

Frederick Douglas



A book is a dream that you hold in your hand.

Neil Gaiman

A book is a device to ignite the imagination.

Alan Bennet

Make it a rule never to give a child a book you would not read yourself.

George Bernard Shaw



There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all!

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

The more that you read, the more things you know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go?

Dr Seuss

LANGUAGE *is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children, a language with which to communicate, grow, learn and think ultimately everything we do is with and through language.*

There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.

Joseph Brodsky

Websites and online resources:

- **21 Online Literacy Resources For Teachers And Students**
  https://www.teachthought.com/literacy/21-literacy-resources-for-the-digital-teacher/

- **31 Amazing Sources for Free Teacher Resources**
  https://www.weareteachers.com/free-teacher-resources/

- **17 Must-Have Literacy Resources to Ensure Reading Success**
  https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/scholasticcomtors/2018-2019/17-must-have-literacy-resources-to-catapult-your-students-to-rea/

- **Reading Rockets**
  https://www.readingrockets.org/audience/teachers

- **Literacy resources for teachers of the Deaf**
  https://www.verywellhealth.com/literacy-resources-for-teaching-deaf-children-1049316

- **National Literacy Trust**
  https://literacytrust.org.uk/free-resources/

- **Literacy teaching for deaf learners**
  https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/literacy-teaching-for-deaf-pupils

- **Literacy for DeafBlind learners**
  https://deafblind.ufl.edu/topics/communication-literacy/

- **National Deaf Child Society- Improving literacy**
  https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/being-deaf-friendly/information-for-professionals/primary-education/improving-deaf-childrens-literacy-skills/