

A Cross-linguistic Reading Program for Signing Deaf Children  
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Given that the reading instruction for deaf/hard of hearing (d/hh) children is not clearly examined or defined, it is taken upon ourselves to determine what is needed in order to clarify the needs of signing d/hh children and how educators can instruct them for the purpose of literacy. Previous research findings indicated that deaf children experienced reading difficulties (e.g., Padden & Ramsey, 1998; Paul, 2003; Paul & Quigley, 1987), due to all curriculums being spoken language-based. The existing spoken language-based curriculums are inaccessible for all d/hh children, as they cannot hear (Supalla & Cripps, 2008). Educators have found that there is a high correlation between high American Sign Language (ASL) proficiency and high academic achievement in English among d/hh children (e.g., Hoffmeister, 2000; Padden & Ramsey, 2000; Strong & Prinz, 2000). However, there is a lack of understanding, pedagogically-wise, as to how to teach d/hh children who use ASL, to read English as their second language. For teaching d/hh children in learning how to read English, Supalla, Wix, & McKee (2001) proposed the use of an innovative reading program that consists of gloss, ASL graphemes, and comparative analysis.

A number of researchers and educators have adopted this signed language-based curriculum with the same objective in mind, which is to ensure that d/hh children learn how to read in a cross-linguistic fashion. From these researchers' research and development, educators working with deaf children will then understand more on how they can teach d/hh children using a spoken language (i.e., English), simply by bypassing the speech-sound requirement, for reading purposes (Supalla & Blackburn, 2003). The current research and development of this signed language-based curriculum from a varied field of presenters indicates interesting findings in different areas of literacy. They are: 1) the feasibility of the cross-linguistic curriculum, 2) reading processes with deaf children, 3) facilitating the use of phonological awareness, 4) developing and internalizing phonemic awareness, and 5) developing the animated ASL dictionary.